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The Hoosier Book
of
Riley Verse

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THE HOOSIER BOOK

The Hoosier Book

Containing Poems in Dialect

By
James Whitcomb Riley

Collected and Arranged by
Hewitt Hanson Howland

INDIANAPOLIS
THE BOBBS-MERRILL COMPANY
PUBLISHERS

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1903, 1904, 1907, 1909, 1913

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Mrs. Margaret Clement

PRESS OF
BRAUNWORTH & CO.
BOOK MANUFACTURERS
BROOKLYN, N. Y.

TO
JOHNTY

INTRODUCTION

When James Whitcomb Riley was a very small boy, too young to read, he fell in love at first sight with a book, and like all intense lovers he at once desired to possess the object of his affection. By thrift and careful hoarding he got together pennies equal to the price, and the little red and gold "poetry book" fell into his eager, outstretched, freckled hands.

Now he did not love this early treasure for what it contained, but for its look, for the feel of it in his hand, as he afterward said. These same emotions were stirred when in 1911 he was presented with the first copy of *The Lockerbie Book*. "I like its look and the feel of it," he said, and thereupon repeated the story of his first literary love.

So it came about that, at the proper time, he suggested and even urged a companion volume, to contain only dialect verse, and with that spontaneous genius for nomenclature which was so remarkably his, instantly christened the new collection: *The Hoosier Book—The Hoosier Book of Riley Verse*. This was but a short time after his return to Indianapolis from a winter in the South, and only a few months before he departed on that last great journey to the land where it is always afternoon.

His never imposed but always unerring taste, his gentle criticism, his tactful suggestions, all so helpful in the preparation of *The Lockerbie Book*, have been wanting in the selection of poems for this volume, but the poems them-

selves, every line, every word, had the final touch of his careful hand.

Whether he is smiling over my labors, wondering at the inclusion of this or the exclusion of that, pleased over the order here or displeased over the lack of it there—the certainty of one thing cheers me: he would like the look of *The Hoosier Book* and the feel of it in his hand.

Mr. Riley's verse written in the native tongue of his native state is the verse that brought him first into public regard, is the verse by which he is most widely known, and on which his claim to immortality will unquestionably rest.

Finer stanzas he may have written in the English of Elizabeth, but in the idiom of the Hoosier he has sung the songs of a people.

H. H. M.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

THE HOOSIER BOOK

NEIGHBORLY POEMS

I

My Philosophy

I AIN'T, ner don't p'tend to be,
Much posted on philosophy;
But thare is times, when all alone,
I work out idees of my own.
And of these same thare is a few
I'd like to jest refer to you—
Pervidin' that you don't object
To listen clos't and rickollect.

I allus argy that a man
Who does about the best he can
Is plenty good enough to suit
This lower mundane institute—
No matter ef his daily walk
Is subject fer his neighbor's talk,
And critic-minds of ev'ry whim
Jest all git up and go fer him!

I

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I knowed a feller onc't that had
The yeller-janders mighty bad,—
And each and ev'ry friend he'd meet
Would stop and give him some receet
Fer cuorin' of 'em. But he'd say
He kindo' thought they'd go away
Without no medicin', and boast
That he'd git well without one doste.

He kep' a-yellerin' on—and they
Perdictin' that he'd die some day
Before he knowed it! Tuck his bed,
The feller did, and lost his head,
And wundered in his mind a spell—
Then rallied, and, at last, got well;
But ev'ry friend that said he'd die
Went back on him eternally!

It's natchurl enough, I guess,
When some gits more and some gits less,
Fer them-uns on the slimmeest side
To claim it ain't a fare divide;
And I've knowed some to lay and wait,
And git up soon, and set up late,
To ketch some feller they could hate
Fer goin' at a faster gait.

The signs is bad when folks commence
A-findin' fault with Providence,
And balkin' 'cause the earth don't shake
At ev'ry prancin' step they take.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

No man is grate tel he can see
How less than little he would be
Ef stripped to self, and stark and bare
He hung his sign out anywhere.

My doctern is to lay aside
Contentions, and be satisfied:
Jest do your best, and praise er blame
That follers that, counts jest the same.
I've allus noticed grate success
Is mixed with troubles, more or less,
And it's the man who does the best
That gits more kicks than all the rest.

2

The Clover

SOME sings of the lilly, and daisy, and rose,
And the pansies and pinks that the Summertime throws
In the green grassy lap of the medder that lays
Blinkin' up at the sky's through the sunshiney days;
But what is the lilly and all of the rest
Of the flowers, to a man with a hart in his brest
That was dipped brimmin' full of the honey and dew
Of the sweet clover-blossoms his babyhood knew?

I never set eyes on a clover-field now,
Er fool round a stable, er climb in the mow,
But my childhood comes back jest as clear and as plane
As the smell of the clover I'm sniffin' again;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I wunder away in a bare-footed dream,
Whare I tangle my toes in the blossoms that gleam
With the dew of the dawn of the morning of love
Ere it wept ore the graves that I'm weepin' above.

And so I love clover—it seems like a part
Of the sacerdest sorrows and joys of my hart;
And wharever it blossoms, oh, thare let me bow
And thank the good God as I'm thankin' Him now;
And I pray to Him still fer the stren'th when I die,
To go out in the clover and tell it good-bye,
And lovin'ly nestle my face in its bloom
While my soul slips away on a breth of purfume.

3

The Tree-Toad

“SCUR'OUS-LIKE,” said the tree-toad,
“I’ve twittered fer rain all day;
And I got up soon,
And hollered tel noon—
But the sun, hit blazed away,
Tel I jest clumb down in a crawfish-hole,
Weary at hart, and sick at soul!

“Dozed away fer an hour,
And I tackled the thing ag’in:
And I sung, and sung,
Tel I knowed my lung
Was jest about give in;
And *then*, thinks I, ef hit don’t rain *now*,
They’s nothin’ in singin’, anyhow!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Onc't in a while some farmer
Would come a-drivin' past;
And he'd hear my cry,
And stop and sigh—
Tel I jest laid back, at last,
And I hollered rain tel I thought my th'oat
Would bust wide open at ever' note!

"But I *fetch*ed her!—O I *fetch*ed her!—
'Cause a little while ago,
As I kindo' set,
With one eye shet,
And a-singin' soft and low,
A voice drapped down on my fevered brain,
A-sayin',—*'Ef you'll jest hush I'll rain!'*"

4 *The Old Swimmin'-Hole*

OH! the old swimmin'-hole! whare the crick so still and
deep

Looked like a baby-river that was laying half asleep,
And the gurgle of the worter round the drift jest below
Sounded like the laugh of something we onc't ust to know
Before we could remember anything but the eyes
Of the angels lookin' out as we left Paradise;
But the merry days of youth is beyond our controle,
And it's hard to part ferever with the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the happy days of yore,
When I ust to lean above it on the old sickamore,
Oh! it showed me a face in its warm sunny tide
That gazed back at me so gay and glorified,

THE HOOSTER BOOK

It made me love myself, as I leaped to caress
My shadder smilin' up at me with such tenderness.
But them days is past and gone, and old Time's tuck his toll
From the old man come back to the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! In the long, lazy days
When the humdrum of school made so many run-a-ways,
How plesant was the jurney down the old dusty lane,
Whare the tracks of our bare feet was all printed so plane
You could tell by the dent of the heel and the sole
They was lots o' fun on hands at the old swimmin'-hole.
But the lost joys is past! Let your tears in sorrow roll
Like the rain that ust to dapple up the old swimmin'-hole.

Thare the bullrushes growed, and the cattails so tall,
And the sunshine and shadder fell over it all;
And it mottled the worter with amber and gold
Tel the glad lilies rocked in the ripples that rolled;
And the snake-feeder's four gauzy wings fluttered by
Like the ghost of a daisy dropped out of the sky,
Or a wovnded apple-blossom in the breeze's controle
As it cut acrost some orchurd to'rds the old swimmin'-hole.

Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! When I last saw the place,
The scenes was all changed, like the change in my face;
The bridge of the railroad now crosses the spot
Whare the old divin'-log lays sunk and fergot.
And I stray down the banks whare the trees ust to be—
But never again will theyr shade shelter me!
And I wish in my sorrow I could strip to the soul,
And dive off in my grave like the old swimmin'-hole.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

5

How It Happened

I GOT to *thinkin'* of her—both her parunts dead and gone—

And all her sisters married off, and none but her and John
A-livin' all alone thare in that lonesome sorto' way,
And him a blame old bachelor, confirmd'er ev'ry day!
I'd knowed 'em all, from childern, and theyr daddy from
the time

He settled in the neighborhood, and hadn't ary a dime
Er dollar, when he married, fer to start housekeepin' on!—
So I got to *thinkin'* of her—both her parunts dead and gone!

I got to *thinkin'* of her; and a-wundern what *she* done
That all *her sisters* kep' a-gittin' married, one by one,
And her without *no* chances—and the best girl of the pack—
A' old maid, with her hands, you might say, tied behind her
back!

And *Mother*, too, afore she died,—*she* ust to jest take on,
When none of 'em wuz left, you know, but Evaline and
John,

And jest declare to goodness 'at the young men must be
bline

To not see what a wife they'd git ef they got Evaline!

I got to *thinkin'* of her: In my great affliction she
Wuz sich a comfert to us, and so kind and neighborly,—
She'd come, and leave her housework, fer to he'p out little
Jane,

And talk of *her own* mother 'at she'd never see again—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They'd sometimes *cry* together—though, fer the most part,
she

Would have the child so rickonciled and happy-like 'at we
Felt lonesomer'n ever when she'd putt her bonnet on
And say she'd railyly *haf* to be a-gittin' back to John!

I got to *thinkin'* of her, as I say,—and more and more
I'd think of her dependence, and the burdens 'at she bore,—
Her parunts both a-bein' dead, and all her sisters gone
And married off, and her a-livin' thare alone with John—
You might say jest a-toilin' and a-slavin' out her life
Fer a man 'at hadn't pride enough to git hisse'f a wife—
'Less some one married *Evaline* and packed her off some
day!—

So I got to *thinkin'* of her—and—It happened *thataway*.

6 *Thoughts fer the Discuraged Farmer*

THE summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin' locus'
trees;

And the clover in the pastur is a big day fer the bees,
And they been a-swiggin' honey, above board and on the
sly,

Tel they stutter in theyr buzzin' and stagger as they fly.
The flicker on the fence-rail 'pears to jest spit on his wings
And roll up his feathers, by the sassy way he sings;
And the hoss-fly is a-whettin'-up his forelegs fer biz,
And the off-mare is a-switchin' all of her tale they is.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

You can hear the blackbirds jawin' as they foller up the
plow—

Oh, theyr bound to git theyr brekfast, and theyr not a-carin'
how;

So they quarrel in the furries, and they quarrel on the
wing—

But theyr peaceabler in pot-pies than any other thing:
And it's when I git my shotgun drawed up in stiddy rest,
She's as full of tribbellation as a yellor-jacket's nest;
And a few shots before dinner, when the sun's a-shinin'
right,

Seems to kindo'-sorto' sharpen up a feller's appetite!

They's been a heap o' rain, but the sun's out to-day,
And the clouds of the wet spell is all cleared away,
And the woods is all the greener, and the grass is greener
still;

It may rain again to-morry, but I don't think it will.
Some says the crops is ruined, and the corn's drowned
out,

And prophasy the wheat will be a failure, without doubt;
But the kind Providence that has never failed us yet,
Will be on hands onc't more at the 'leventh hour, I bet!

Does the medder-lark complane, as he swims high and dry
Through the waves of the wind and the blue of the sky?

Does the quail set up and whissel in a disappointed way,
Er hang his head in silunce, and sorrow all the day?
Is the chipmuck's health a-failin'?—Does he walk, er does
he run?

Don't the buzzards ooze around up thare jest like they've
allus done?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Is they anythin' the matter with the rooster's lungs er
voice?

Ort a mortul be complanin' when dumb animals rejoice?

Then let us, one and all, be contentud with our lot;
The June is here this mornin', and the sun is shining hot.
Oh! let us fill our harts up with the glory of the day,
And banish ev'ry doubt and care and sorrow fur away!
Whatever be our station, with Providence fer guide,
Sich fine circumstances ort to make us satisfied;
Fer the world is full of roses, and the roses full of dew,
And the dew is full of heavenly love that drips fer me and
you.

7

A Summer's Day

THE Summer's put the idy in
My head that I'm a boy ag'in;
And all around's so bright and gay
I want to put my team away,
And jest git out whare I can lay
And soak my hide full of the day!
But work is work, and must be done—
Yit, as I work, I have my fun,
Jest fancyin' these furries here
Is childhood's paths onc't more so dear:—
And so I walk through medder-lands,
And country lanes, and swampy trails
Whare long bullrushes bresh my hands;
And, tilted on the ridered rails

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Of deadnin' fences, "Old Bob White"

Whissels his name in high delight,

And whirrs away. I wonder still,

Whichever way a boy's feet will—

Whare trees has fell, with tangled tops

Whare dead leaves shakes, I stop fer breth,

Heerin' the acorn as it drops—

H'istin' my chin up still as deth,

And watchin' clos't, with upturned eyes,

The tree where Mr. Squirrel tries

To hide hisse'f above the limb,

But lets his own tale tell on him.

I wonder on in deeper glooms—

Git hungry, hearin' female cries

From old farm-houses, whare perfumes

Of harvest dinners seems to rise

And ta'nt a feller, hart and brane,

With memories he can't explane.

I wonder through the underbresh,

Whare pig-tracks, pintin' to'rds the crick,

Is picked and printed in the fresh

Black bottom-lands, like wimmern pick

Theyr pie-crusts with a fork, some way,

When bakin' fer camp-meetin' day.

I wonder on and on and on,

Tel my gray hair and beard is gone,

And ev'ry wrinkle on my brow

Is rubbed clean out and shaddered now

With curls as brown and fare and fine

As tenderls of the wild grape-vine

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That ust to climb the highest tree
To keep the ripest ones fer me.
I wunder still, and here I am
Wadin' the ford below the dam—
The worter chucklin' round my knee
At hornet-welt and bramble-scratch,
And me a-slippin' 'crost to see
Ef Tyner's plums is ripe, and size
The old man's wortermelon-patch,
With juicy mouth and drouthy eyes.
Then, after sich a day of mirth
And happiness as worlds is wurth—
So tired that Heaven seems nigh about,—
The sweetest tiredness on earth
Is to git home and flatten out—
So tired you can't lay flat enough,
And sorto' wish that you could spread
Out like molasses on the bed,
And jest drip off the aidges in
The dreams that never comes ag'in.

8

A Hymb of Faith

O THOU that doth all things devise
, And fashion fer the best,
He'p us who sees with mortul eyes
To overlook the rest.

They's times, of course, we grope in doubt,
And in afflictions sore;
So knock the louder, Lord, without,
And we'll unlock the door.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Make us to feel, when times looks bad
And tears in pitty melts,
Thou wast the only he'p we had
When they was nothin' else.

Death comes alike to ev'ry man
That ever was borned on earth;
Then let us do the best we can
To live fer all life's wurth.

Ef storms and tempusts dred to see
Makes black the heavens ore,
They done the same in Galilee
Two thousand years before.

But after all, the golden sun
Poured out its floods on them
That watched and waited fer the One
Then borned in Bethlyham.

Also, the star of holy writ
Made noonday of the night,
Whilse other stars that looked at it
Was envious with delight.

The sages then in wurship bowed,
From ev'ry clime so fare;
O, sinner, think of that glad crowd
That congergated thare!

They was content to fall in ranks
With One that knowed the way
From good old Jurden's stormy banks
Clean up to Jedgmunt Day.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

No matter, then, how all is mixed
In our near-sighted eyes,
All things is fer the best, and fixed
Out straight in Paradise.

Then take things as 'God sends 'em here,
And, ef we live er die,
Be more and more contenteder,
Without a-bastin' wily.

O, 'Thou that doth all things devise
And fashion fer the best,
He'p us who sees with mortul eyes
To overlook the rest.

9

Wortermelon Time

OLD wortermelon 'time is a-comin' round ag'in,
And they ain't no mah a-livin' any tickleder'n me,
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

Oh! it's in the sandy soil wortermelons does the best,
And it's thare they'll lay and waller in the sunshine and
the dew
Tel they wear all the green streaks clean off of theyr
breast;
And you bet I ain't a-findin' any fault with them; air
you?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They ain't no better thing in the vegetable line;
And they don't need much 'tendin', as ev'ry farmer
knows;

And when they're ripe and ready fer to pluck from the vine,
I want to say to you they're the best fruit that grows.

It's some likes the yeller-core, and some likes the red,
And it's some says "The Little Californy" is the best;
But the sweetest slice of all I ever wedged in my head,
Is the old "Edingburg Mounting-sprout," of the West.

You don't want no punkins nigh your wortermelon vines—
'Cause, some-way-another, they'll spile your melons,
shore;—
I've seed 'em taste like punkins, from the core to the rines,
Which may be a fact you have heerd of before.

But your melons, that's raised right and 'tended to, with
care,
You can walk around amongst 'em with a parent's pride
and joy;
And thump 'em on the heads with as fatherly a air
As ef each one of them was your little girl er boy.

I joy in my hart jest to hear that rippin' sound
When you split one down the back and jolt the halves in
two,
And the friends you love the best is gethered all around—
And you says unto your sweetheart, "Oh, here's the core
fer you!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I like to slice 'em up in big pieces fer 'em all,
Especshally the childern, and watch theyr high delight
As one by one the rines with theyr pink notches falls,
And they holler fer some more, with unquenched appetite.

Boys takes to it natchurl, and I like to see 'em eat—
A slice of wortermelon's like a frenchharp in theyr hands,
And when they "saw" it through theyr mouth sich music
can't be beat—
'Cause it's music both the sperit and the stummick understands.

Oh, they's more in wortermelons than the purty-colored meat,
And the overflowin' sweetness of the worter squshed betwixt
The up'ard and the down'ard motions of a feller's teeth,
And it's the taste of ripe old age and juicy childhood mixed.

Fer I never taste a melon but my thoughts flies away
To the summertime of youth; and again I see the dawn,
And the fadin' afternoon of the long summer day,
And the dusk and dew a-fallin', and the night a-comin' on.

And there's the corn around us, and the lispin' leaves and trees,
And the stars a-peekin' down on us as still as silver mice,
And us boys in the wortermelons on our hands and knees,
And the new-moon hangin' ore us like a yellor-cored slice.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Oh! it's wortermelon time is a-comin' round ag'in,
And they ain't no man a-livin' any tickleder'n me,
Fer the way I hanker after wortermelons is a sin—
Which is the why and wharefore, as you can plainly see.

10 *When the Frost Is on the Punkin*

WHEN the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in
the shock,
And you hear the kyouck and gobble of the struttin' turkey-
cock,
And the clackin' of the guineys, and the cluckin' of the
hens,
And the rooster's hallylooyer as he tiptoes on the fence;
O, it's then's the times a feller is a-feelin' at his best,
With the risin' sun to greet him from a night of peaceful
rest,
As he leaves the house, bare-headed, and goes out to feed
the stock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

They's something kindo' harty-like about the atmufere
When the heat of summer's over and the coolin' fall is
here—
Of course we miss the flowers, and the blossums on the
trees,
And the mumble of the hummin'-birds and buzzin' of the
bees;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But the air's so appetizin'; and the landscape through the
haze

Of a crisp and sunny morning of the airy autumn days
Is a pictur' that no painter has the colorin' to mock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock.

'The husky, rusty russel of the tassels of the corn,
And the faspin' of the tangled leaves, as golden as the
morn;
The stubble in the furries—kindo' lonesome-like, but still
A-preachin' sermons to us of the barns they grewed to fill;
The strawstack in the meadow, and the reaper in the shed;
The hosses in their stalls below—the clover overhead!—
O, it sets my hart a-clickin' like the tickin' of a clock,
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock!

Then your apples all is getherd, and the ones a feller keeps
Is poured around the celler-floor in red and yeller heaps;
And your cider-makin' 's over, and your wimmern-folks is
through

With their mince and apple-butter, and their souse and
sausage, too! . . .

I don't know how to tell it—but ef sich a thing could be
As the Angels wantin' boardin', and they'd call around on
me—

I'd want to 'commodate 'em—all the whole-indurin' flock—
When the frost is on the punkin and the fodder's in the
shock!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

II *On the Death of Little Mahala* *Ashcraft*

"**L**ITTLE Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;

"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little Haly!" moans the bee;

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the killdeer at twilight;
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly!" all the night.

The sunflowers and the hollyhawks droops over the garden fence;

The old path down the garden walks still holds her foot-prints' dents;

And the well-sweep's swingin' bucket seems to wait fer her to come

And start it on its wortery errant down the old bee-gum.

The beehives all is quiet; and the little Jersey steer,
When any one comes nigh it, acts so lonesome-like and queer;

And the little Banty chickens kindo' cutters faint and low,
Like the hand that now was feedin' 'em was one they didn't know.

They's sorrow in the wavin' leaves of all the apple-trees;
And sorrow in the harvest-sheaves, and sorrow in the breeze;

And sorrow in the twitter of the swallows 'round the shed;
And all the song her redbird sings is "Little Haly's dead!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The medder 'pears to miss her, and the pathway through
the grass,
Whare the dewdrops ust to kiss her little bare feet as she
passed;
And the old pin in the gate-post seems to kindo'-sorto'
doubt
That Haly's little sunburnt hands'll ever pull it out.

Did her father er her mother ever love her more'n me,
Er her sisters er her brother prize her love more tendurly?
I question—and what answer?—only tears, and tears alone,
And ev'ry neighbor's eyes is full o' tear-drops as my own.

"Little Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree;
"Little Haly!" sighs the clover, "Little Haly!" moans the
bee;
"Little Haly! Little Haly!" calls the killdeer at twilight,
And the katydids and crickets hollers "Haly!" all the night.

O, IT'S many's the scenes which is dear to my mind
As I think of my childhood so long left behind;
The home of my birth, with its old puncheon-floor,
And the bright morning-glorys that growed round the door;
The warped clabboard roof whare the rain it run off
Into streams of sweet dreams as I laid in the loft,
Countin' all of the joys that was dearest to me,
And a-thinkin' the most of the mulberry tree.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And to-day as I dream, with both eyes wide-awake,
I can see the old tree, and its limbs as they shake,
And the long purple berries that rained on the ground
Where the pastur' was bald where we trommpt it around.
And again, peekin' up through the thick leafy shade,
I can see the glad smiles of the friends when I strayed
With my little bare feet from my own mother's knee
To foller them off to the mulberry tree.

Leanin' up in the forks, I can see the old rail,
And the boy climbin' up it, claw, tooth, and toe-nail,
And in fancy can hear, as he spits on his hands,
The ring of his laugh and the rip of his pants.
But that rail led to glory, as certin and shore
As I'll never climb thare by that rout' any more—
What was all the green lauruls of Fame unto me,
With my brows in the boughs of the mulberry tree!

Then it's who can fergit the old mulberry tree
That he knowed in the days when his thoughts was as free
As the flutterin' wings of the birds that flew out
Of the tall wavin' tops as the boys come about?
O, a crowd of my memories, laughin' and gay,
Is a-climbin' the fence of that pastur' to-day,
And a-pantin' with joy, as us boys ust to be,
They go racin' acrost fer the mulberry tree.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

13 *To My Old Friend, William Leachman*

FER forty year and better you have been a friend to me,
Through days of sore afflictions and dire adversity,
You allus had a kind word of counsul to impart,
Which was like a healin' 'ntment to the sorrow of my hart.

When I burried my first womern, William Leachman, it was
you
Had the only consolation that I could listen to—
Fer I knowed you had gone through it and had rallied
from the blow,
And when you said I'd do the same, I knowed you'd ort to
know.

But that time I'll long remember; how I wundered here
and there—
Through the settin'-room and kitchen, and out in the open
air—
And the snowflakes whirlin', whirlin', and the fields a
frozen glare,
And the neighbors' sleds and wagons congeratin' ev'ry-
whare.

I turned my eyes to'rds heaven, but the sun was hid away;
I turned my eyes to'rds earth again, but all was cold and
gray;
And the clock, like ice a-crackin', clickt the icy hours in
two—
And my eyes'd never thawed out ef it hadn't been fer you!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

We set thare by the smoke-house—me and you out thare
alone—

Me a-thinkin'—you a-talkin' in a soothin' undertone—
You a-talkin'—me a-thinkin' of the summers long ago,
And a-writin' "Marthy—Marthy" with my finger in the
snow!

William Leachman, I can see you jest as plane as I could
then;

And your hand is on my shoulder, and you rouse me up
again;

And I see the tears a-drippin' from your own eyes, as you
say:

"Be rickonciled and bear it—we but linger fer a day!"

At the last Old Settlers' Meetin' we went j'intly, you and
me—

Your hosses and my wagon, as you wanted it to be;
And sence I can remember, from the time we've neighbored
here,

In all sich friendly actions you have double-done your
sheer.

It was better than the meetin', too, that nine-mile talk we
had

Of the times when we first settled here and travel was so
bad;

When we had to go on hoss-back, and sometimes on
"Shanks's mare,"

And "blaze" a road fer them behind that had to travel
thare.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And now we was a-trottin' 'long a level gravel pike,
In a big two-hoss road-wagon, jest as easy as you like—
Two of us on the front seat, and our wimmern-folks behind,
A-settin' in they Winsor-cheers in perfect peace of mind!

And we pinte out old landmarks, nearly faded out of sight:—
Thare they ust to rob the stage-coach; thare Gash Morgan
had the fight
With the old stag-deer that pronged him—how he battled
fer his life,
And lived to prove the story by the handle of his knife.

Thare the first griss-mill was put up in the Settlement,
and we
Had tuck our grindin' to it in the Fall of Forty-three—
When we tuck our rifles with us, techin' elbows all the way,
And a-stickin' right together ev'ry minute, night and day.

Thare ust to stand the tavern that they called the "Travelers' Rest,"
And thare, beyent the covered bridge, "The Counterfitters' Nest"—
Whare they claimed the house was ha'nted—that a man was
murdered thare,
And burried underneath the floor, er 'round the place somewhere.

And the old Plank-road they laid along in Fifty-one er two—
You know we talked about the times when the old road
was new:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

How "Uncle Sam" put down that road and never taxed
the State

Was a problem, don't you rickollect, we couldn't *dimon-*
strate?

Ways was devius, William Leachman, that me and you has
past;

But as I found you true at first, I find you true at last;
And, now the time's a-comin' mighty nigh our jurney's end,
I want to throw wide open all my soul to you, my friend.

With the stren'th of all my bein', and the heat of hart and
brane,

And ev'ry livin' drop of blood in artery and vane,
I love you and respect you, and I venerate your name,
Fer the name of William Leachman and True Manhood's
jest the same!

14

My Fiddle

MY fiddle?—Well, I kindo' keep her handy, don't you
know!

Though I ain't so much inclined to tromp the strings and
switch the bow

As I was before the timber of my elbows got so dry,
And my fingers was more limber-like and caperish and
spry;

Yit I can plonk and plunk and plink,
And tune her up and play,
And jest lean back and laugh and wink
At ev'ry rainy day!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

My playin' 's only middlin'—tunes I picked up when a boy—
The kindo'-sorto' fiddlin' that the folks calls "cordaroy";
"The Old Fat Gal," and "Rye-straw," and "My Sailyor's on
the Sea,"

Is the old cowntillions I "saw" when the ch'ice is left to me;
And so I plunk and plonk and plink,
And rosum-up my bow
And play the tunes that makes you think
The devil's in your, toe!

I was allus a romancin', do-less boy, to tell the truth,
A-fiddlin' and a-dancin', and a-wastin' of my youth,
And a-actin' and a-cuttin'-up all sorts o' silly pranks
That wasn't worth a botton of anybody's thanks!

But they tell me, when I ust to plink
And plonk and plunk and play,
My music seemed to have the kink
O' drivin' cares away!

That's how this here old fiddle's won my hart's indurin'
love!

From the strings acrost her middle, to the schreechin' keys
above—

From her "apern," over "bridge," and to the ribbon round
her throat,

She's a wooin', cooin' pigeon, singin' "Love me" ev'ry note!

And so I pat her neck, and plink
Her strings with lovin' hands,—

And, list'nin' clos't, I sometimes think
She kindo' understands!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

15

Erasmus Wilson

'R AS WILSON, I respect you, 'cause
You're common, like you allus was
Afore you went to town and s'prised
The world by gittin' "reckonized,"
And yit perservin', as I say,
Your common hoss-sense ev'ry way!
And when that name o' yourn occurs
On hand-bills, er in newspapers,
Er letters writ by friends 'at ast
About you, same as in the past,
And neighbors and relations 'low
You're out o' the tall timber now,
And "gittin' thare" about as spry's
The next!—as *I say*, when my eyes,
Er ears, lights on your name, I mind
The first time 'at I come to find
You—and my Rickollection yells,
Jest jubilunt as old sleigh-bells—
"Ras Wilson! Say! Hold up! and shake
A paw, fer old acquaintance sake!"
My *Rickollection*, more'n like,
Hain't overly too apt to strike
The what's-called "cultchurd public eye"
As wisdom of the deepest dye,—
And yit my *Rickollection* makes
So blame lots fewer bad mistakes,
Regardin' human-natur' and
The fellers 'at I've shook theyr hand,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Than my *best jedgemunt's* done, the day
I've met 'em—'fore I got away,—
'At—Well, 'Ras Wilson, let me grip
Your hand in warmest pardnership!

Dad-burn ye!—Like to jest haul back
A' old flat-hander, jest che-whack!
And take you 'twixt the shoulders, say,
Sometime you're lookin' t'other way!—
Er, maybe whilse you're speakin' to
A whole blame Court-house-full o' 'thu-
Syastic friends, I'd like to jest
Come in-like and break up the nest
Afore you hatched another cheer,
And say: "'Ras, I can't stand hitched here
All night—ner wouldn't ef I could!—
But Little Bethel Neighborhood,
You ust to live at, 's sent some word
Fer you, ef ary chance occurred
To git it to ye,—so ef you
Kin stop, I'm waitin' fer ye to!"

You're common, as I said afore—
You're common, yit uncommon *more*.—
You allus kindo' 'pear, to me,
What all mankind had ort to be—
Jest *natchurl*, and the more hurraus
You git, the less you know the cause—
Like as ef God Hisse'f stood by
Where best on earth hain't half knee-high,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *seein'* like, and knowin' *He*
'S the Only Grate Man really,
You're jest content to size your hight
With any feller man's in sight.—
And even then they's scrubs, like me,
Feels stuck-up, in your company!

Like now:—I want to go with you
Plum out o' town a mile er two
Clean past the Fair-ground whare's some hint
O' pennyrile er peppermint,
And bottom-lands, and timber thick
Enough to sorto' shade the crick!
I want to *see* you—want to set
Down somers, whare the grass hain't wet,
And kindo' *breathe* you, like puore air—
And taste o' your tobacker thare,
And talk and chaw! Talk o' the birds
We've knocked with cross-bows.—Afterwards
Drop, mayby, into some dispute
'Bout "pomgrannies," er cal'mus-root—
And how *they* growed, and *whare?*—on tree
Er vine?—Who's best boy-memory!—
And wasn't it *gingsang*, insted
O' cal'mus-root, growed like you said?—
Er how to tell a coon-track from
A mussrat's;—er how milksick come—
Er ef *cows* brung it?—Er why now
We never see no "muley"-cow—
Ner "frizzly"-chicken—ner no "clay-
Bank" mare—ner nothin' thataway!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And what's come o' the *yellow-core*
Old worter melons?—hain't no more.—
Tomattusus, the same—all *red-*
Uns nowadays—All past joys fled—
Each and all jest gone k-whizz!
Like our days o' childhood is!

Dag-gone it, 'Ras! they hain't no friend,
It 'pears-like, left to comperhend
Sich things as these but you, and see
How dratted sweet they air to me!
But you, 'at's loved 'em allus, and
Kin sort 'em out and understand
'Em, same as the fine books you've read,
And all fine thoughts you've writ, er said,
Er worked out, through long nights o' rain,
And doubts and fears, and hopes, again,
As bright as morning when she broke,—
You know a tear-drop from a joke!
And so, 'Ras Wilson, stop and shake
A paw, fer old acquaintance sake!

16

My Ruthers

*[Writ durin' State Fair at Indanoplis, whilse visitin' a
Soninlaw then residin' thare, who has sence got back to the
country whare he says a man that's raised there ort to
a-stayed in the first place.]*

I TELL you what I'd ruther do—
Ef I only had my ruthers,—
I'd ruther work when I wanted to
Than be bossed round by others;—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'd ruther kindo' git the swing
O' what was *needed*, first, I jing!
Afore I *swet* at anything!—
Ef I only had my ruthers;—
In fact I'd aim to be the same
With all men as my brothers;
And they'd all be the same with *me*—
Ef I only had my ruthers.

I wouldn't likely know it all—
Ef I only had my ruthers;—
I'd know *some* sense, and some baseball—
Some *old* jokes, and—some others:
I'd know *some politics*, and 'low
Some tarif-speeches same as now,
Then go hear Nye on "Branes and How
To Detect Theyr Presence." *T'others*,
That stayed away, I'd *let* 'em stay—
All my dissentin' brothers
Could chuse as shore a kill er cuore,
Ef I only had my ruthers.

The pore 'ud git theyr dues *sometimes*—
Ef I only had my ruthers,—
And be paid *dollars* 'stid o' *dimes*,
Fer childern, wives and mothers:
Theyr boy that slaves; theyr girl that sews—
Fer *others*—not herself, God knows!—
The grave's *her* only change of clothes!
. . . Ef I only had my ruthers,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They'd all have "stuff" and time enough
To answer one-another's
Appealin' prayer fer "lovin' care"—
Ef I only had my ruthers.

They'd be few folks 'ud ast fer trust,
Ef I only had my ruthers,
And blame few business men to bu'st
Theyrselves, er harts of others :
• Big Guns that come here durin' Fair-
Week could put up jest anywhare,
And find a full-and-plenty thare,
Ef I only had my ruthers :
The rich and great 'ud 'sociate
With all theyr lowly brothers,
Feelin' *we* done the honorun—
Ef I only had my ruthers.

17 *A Old Played-Out Song*

IT'S the curiousest thing in creation,
Whenever I hear that old song
"Do They Miss Me at Home," I'm so bothered,
My life seems as short as it's long!—
Fer ev'rything 'pears like adzackly
It 'peared in the years past and gone,—
When I started out sparkin', at twenty,
And had my first neckercher on!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Though I'm wrinkleder, older and grayer
Right now than my parents was then,
You strike up that song "Do They Miss Me,"
And I'm jest a youngster again!—
I'm a-standin' back thare in the furries
A-wishin' fer evening to come,
And a-whisperin' over and over
Them words "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

You see, *Marthy Ellen* she sung it
The first time I heerd it; and so,
As she was my very first sweetheart,
It reminds me of her, don't you know;—
How her face ust to look, in the twilight,
As I tuck her to Spellin'; and she
Kep' a-hummin' that song tel I ast her,
Pint-blank, ef she ever missed *me*!

I can shet my eyes now, as you sing it,
And hear her low answerin' words;
And then the glad chirp of the crickets,
As clear as the twitter of birds;
And the dust in the road is like velvet,
And the ragweed and fennel and grass
Is as sweet as the scent of the lilies
Of Eden of old, as we pass.

"*Do They Miss Me at Home?*" Sing it lower—
And softer—and sweet as the breeze
That powdered our path with the snowy
White bloom of the old locus'-trees!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Let the whipperwills he'p you to sing it,
And the echoes 'way over the hill,
Tel the moon boolges out, in a chorus
Of stars, and our voices is still.

But, oh! "They's a chord in the music
That's missed when *her* voice is away!"
Though I listen from midnight tel morning,
And dawn tel the dusk of the day!
And I grope through the dark, lookin' up'ards
And on through the heavenly dome,
With my longin' soul singin' and sobbin'
The words "Do They Miss Me at Home?"

18

"Coon-Dog Wess"

"COON-DOG WESS"—he allus went
'Mongst us here by that-air name.
Moved in this-here Settlement
From next county—he laid claim,—
Lived down in the bottoms—whare
Ust to be some coons in thare!—

In nigh Clayton's, next the crick,—
Mind old Billy ust to say
Coons in thare was jest that thick,
He'p him corn-plant any day!—
And, in rostneer-time, be then
Aggin' him to plant again!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well,—In Spring o' '67,
This-here "Coon-dog Wess" he come—
Fetchin' 'long 'bout forty-'leven
Ornriest-lookin' hounds, I gum!
Ever mortul-man laid eyes
On sence dawn o' Christian skies!

Wife come traipsin' at the rag-
Tag-and-bobtail of the crowd,
Dogs and childern, with a bag
Corn-meal and some side-meat,—*Proud*
And as *independunt*—*My!*—
Yit a mild look in her eye.

Well—this "Coon-dog Wess" he jest
Moved in that-air little pen
Of a pole-shed, aidgin' west
On "The Slues o' Death," called then.—
Otter- and mink-hunters ust
To camp thare 'fore game vam-moosd.

Abul-bodied man,—and lots
Call fer *choppers*—and fer hands
To git *cross-ties* out.—But what's
Work to sich as understands
Ways appinted and is hence
Under special providence?—

"Coon-dog Wess's" holts was *hounds*
And *coon-huntin'*; and he knowed
His own range, and stayed in bounds
And left work fer them 'at showed
Talents fer it—same as his
Gifts regardin' coon-dogs is.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Hounds of ev'ry mungerl breed
Ever whelped on earth!—Had these
Yeller kind, with punkin-seed
Marks above theyr eyes—and fleas
Both to sell and keep!—Also
These-here lop-yeerd hounds, you know.—

Yes-and *brindle* hounds—and long,
Ga'nt hounds, with them eyes they' got
So blame *sorry*, it seems wrong,
'Most, to kick 'em as to not!
Man, though, wouldn't dast, I guess,
Kick a hound fer "Coon-dog Wess"!

'Tended to his own affairs
Stric'ly;—made no brags,—and yit
You could see 'at them hounds' cares
'Peared like *his*,—and he'd 'a' fit
Fer 'em, same as wife er child!—
Them facts made folks rickonciled,

Sorto', fer to let him be
And not pester him. And then
Word begin to spread 'at he
Had brung in as high as ten
Coon-pelts in one night—and yit
Didn't 'pear to boast of it!

Neighborhood made some complaints
'Bout them plague-gone hounds at night
Howlin' fit to wake the saints,
Clean from dusk tel plum daylight!
But to "Coon-dog Wess" them-thare
Howls was "music in the air"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fetcht his pelts to Gilson's Store—

Newt he shipped fer him, and said,
Sence *he'd* cooned thare, he'd shipped more

Than three hundred pelts!—"By Ned!
Git shet of my *store*," Newt says,
'T'd go in with 'Coon-dog Wess'!"

And the feller 'peared to be

Makin' best and most he could
Of his rale prospairity:—

Bought some household things—and *good*,—
Likewise, wagon-load onc't come
From wharever he'd moved from.

But pore feller's huntin'-days,

'Bout them times, was glidin' past!—
Goes out onc't one night and *stays*!

. . . Neighbors they turned out, at last,
Headed by his wife and one
Half-starved hound—and search begun.

Boys said, that blame hound, he led

Searchin' party, 'bout a half
Mile ahead, and bellerin', said,

Worse'n ary yearlin' calf!—
Tel, at last, come fur-off sounds
Like the howl of other hounds.

And-sir, shore enough, them signs

Fetcht 'em—in a' hour er two—
Whare the *pack* was;—and they finds
"Coon-dog Wess" *right thare*;—And you
Would admitted he was right
Stayin', as he had, *all night*!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Facts is, cuttin' down a tree,
The blame thing had sorto' fell
In a twist-like—*mercy me!*
And had ketched him.—Couldn't tell,
Wess said, *how* he'd managed—yit
He'd got both legs under it!

Fainted and come to, I s'pose,
'Bout a dozen times whilse they
Chopped him out!—And wife she froze
To him!—bresh his hair away
And smile cheerful'—only when
He'd faint.—Cry and kiss him *then*.

Had *his* nerve!—And nussed him through,—
Neighbors he'pped her—all she'd stand.—
Had a loom, and she could do
Carpet-weavin' raily grand!—
“‘Sides,” she ust to laugh and say,
“She'd have Wess, now, *night* and day!”

As fer *him*, he'd say, says-ee,
“I'm resigned to bein' lame:—
They was four coons up that tree,
And hounds got 'em, jest the same!”
'Peared like, one er two legs less
Never worried “Coon-dog Wess”!

A Tale of the Airly Days

O H! tell me 'a tale of the airly days—
 Of the times as they used to be;
 "Piller of Fi-er" and "Shakespeare's Plays"
 Is a' most too deep fer me!
 I want plane facts, and I want plane words,
 Of the good old-fashioned ways,
 When speech run free as the songs of birds
 'Way back in the airly days.

Tell me a tale of the timber-lands—
 Of the old-time pioneers;
 Somepin' a pore man understands
 With his feelin's 's well as ears.
 Tell of the old log house,—about
 The loft, and the puncheon flore—
 The old fi-er-place, with the crane swung out,
 And the latch-string through the door.

Tell of the things jest as they was—
 They don't need no excuse!—
 Don't tetch 'em up like the poets does,
 Tel theyr all too fine fer use!—
 Say they was 'leven in the fambily—
 Two beds, and the chist, below,
 And the trundle-beds that each helt three,
 And the clock and the old bureau.

Then blow the horn at the old back-door
 Tel the echoes all halloo,
 And the childern gethers home onc't more,
 Jest as they ust to do:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Blow fer Pap tel he hears and comes,
With Tomps and Elias, too,
A-marchin' home, with the fife and drums
And the old Red White and Blue!

Blow and blow tel the sound draps low
As the moan of the whipperwill,
And wake up Mother, and Ruth and Jo,
All sleepin' at Bethel Hill:
Blow and call tel the faces all
Shine out in the back-log's blaze,
And the shadders dance on the old hewed wall
As they did in the airly days.

20

"Mylo Jones's Wife"

"**M**YLO JONES'S wife" was all
I heerd, mighty near, last Fall—
Visitun relations down
T'other side of Morgantown!
Mylo Jones's wife she does
This and that, and "those" and "thus"—
Can't bide babies in her sight—
Ner no childern, day and night,
Whoopin' round the premises—
Ner no nothin' else, I guess!

Mylo Jones's wife she 'lows
She's the boss of her own house!—
Mylo—consequences is—
Stays whare things seem *some* like *his*,—
Uses, mostly, with the stock—
Coaxin' "Old Kate" not to balk,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ner kick hoss-flies' branes out, ner
Act, I s'pose, so much like *her*!
Yit the wimern-folks tells you
She's *perfection*.—Yes they do!

Mylo's wife she says she's found
Home hain't home with *men-folks* round
When they's work like *hern* to do—
Picklin' pears and *butcher'n'*, too,
And a-render'n' lard, and then
Cookin' fer a pack of men
To come trackin' up the flore
She's scrubbed *tel* she'll scrub no *more*!—
Yit she'd keep things clean ef they
Made her scrub tel Jedgmunt Day!

Mylo Jones's wife she sews
Carpet-rags and patches clothes
Jest year *in* and *out*!—and yit
Whare's the livin' use of it?
She asts Mylo that,—And he
Gits back whare he'd ruther be,
With his team;—jest *plows*—and don't
Never sware—like some folks won't!
Think ef *he'd cut loose*, I gum!
'D he'p his heavenly chances some!

Mylo's wife don't see no use,
Ner no reason ner excuse
Fer his pore relations to
Hang round like they allus do!
Thare 'bout onc't a year—and *she*—
She jest *ga'nts* 'em, folks tells me,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

On spiced pears!—Pass Mylo one,
He says “No, he don’t chuse none!”
Workin’ men like Mylo they
’D ort to have *meat* ev’ry day!

Dad-burn Mylo Jones’s wife!
Ruther rake a blame case-knife.
’Croست my wizen than to see
Sich a womern rulin’ *me*!—
Ruther take and turn in and
Raise a fool mule-colt by hand!
Mylo, though—od-rot the man!—
Jest keeps ca’m—like some folks *can*—
And ’low sich as her, I s’pose,
Is *Man’s he’pmeet*!—Mercy knows!

21 *Old John Clevenger on Buckeyes*

OLD John Clevenger lets on,
Allus, like he’s purty rough
Timber.—He’s a grate old John!—
“Rough?”—don’t swaller no sich stuff!
Moved here, sence the war was through
From Ohio—somers near
Old Bucyrus,—loyal, too,
As us “Hoosiers” is to *here*!
Git old John stirred up a bit
On his old home stompin’-ground—
Talks same as he lived thare yit,
When some subject brings it round—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Like, fer instunce, Sund'y last,
Fetch'd his wife, and et and stay'd
All night with us.—Set and gassed
Tel plum midnight—'cause I made
Some remark 'bout "buckeyes" and
"What was buckeyes good fer?"—So,
Like I 'low'd, he waved his hand
And lit in and let me know :—
"What is Buckeyes good fer?"—What's
Pineys and *fer-git-me-nots*?—
Honeysuckles, and sweet peas,
And sweet-williamsuz, and these
Johnny-jump-ups ev'rywhare,
Growin' round the roots o' trees
In Spring-weather?—what air *they*
Good fer?—kin you tell me—*Hey?*
'Good to look at?' Well they air!
'Specially when *Winter's* gone,
Clean *dead-cert'in!* and the wood's
Green again, and sun feels good's
June!—and shed your blame boots on
The back porch, and lit out to
Roam round like you ust to do,
Bare-foot, up and down the crick,
Whare the buckeyes grew'd so thick,
And witch-hazel and pop-paws,
And hackberries and black-haws—
With wild-pizen vines jis knit
Over and *en-nunder* it,
And wove round it all, I jing!
Tel you couldn't hardly stick
A durn *case-knife* through the thing!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

• Wriggle round through *that*; and then—
All het-up, and scratched and tanned,
And muskeeter-bit and mean-
Feelin'—all at onc't again,
Come out suddent on a clean
Slopin' little hump o' green
Dry soft grass, as fine and grand
As a pollor-sofy!—And
Jis pile down thare!—and tell *me*
Anywhares you'd ruther be—
'Ceptin' *right thare*, with the wild-
• Flowrs all round ye, and your eyes
Smilin' with 'em at the skies,
Happy as a little child!
Well!—right here, *I* want to say,
Poets kin talk all they please
'Bout 'wild-flowrs, in colors gay,'
And 'sweet blossoms flauntin' theyr
Beauteous fragrance on the breeze'—
But the sight o' *buckeyes* jis
Sweet to me as *blossoms* is!

"I'm *Ohio-born*—right whare
People's *all* called 'Buckeyes' *thare*—
'Cause, I s'pose, our buckeye crap's
Biggest in the world, perhaps!—
Ner my head don't stretch my hat
Too much on account o' *that*!—
'Cause it's Natchur's ginerus hand
Sows 'em broadcast ore the land,
With eye-single fer man's good
And the ginerall neighborhood!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So *buckeyes* jis natchurly
'Pears like *kith-and-kin* to *me*!
'S like the good old sayin' wuz,
'*Purty is as purty does!*'—
We can't *eat* 'em, cookd er raw—
Yit, I mind, *tomattusuz*
Wuz considered *pizenus*
Onc't—and dasent eat 'em!—*Pshaw*—
'Twouldn't take *me* by surprise,
Someday, ef we et *buckeyes!*
That, though, 's nuther here ner thare!—
Jis the Buckeye whare we air,
In the present times, is what
Ockuppies my lovin' care
And my most perfoundest thought!
. . . Guess, this minute, what I got
In my pocket, 'at I've packed
Purt' nigh forty year.—A dry,
Slick and shiny, warped and cracked,
Wilted, weazened old *buckeye!*
What's it *thare* fer? What's my hart
In my *brest* fer?—'Cause it's part
Of my *life*—and 'tends to biz—
Like this *buckeye's* bound to act—
'Cause *it* 'tends to *Rhumatiz!*

“ . . . Ketched more *rhumatiz* than *fish*,
Seinen', onc't—and pants froze on
My blame legs!—And ust to wish
I wuz well er *dead and gone!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc give up the case, and shod
His old hoss again and stayed
On good roads!—*And thare I laid!*
Pap he tuck some bluegrass sod
Steeped in whisky, bilin'-hot,
And socked *that* on! Then I got
Sorto' holt o' him, *somehow*—
Kindo' crazy-like, they say—
And I'd *killed* him, like as not,
Ef I hadn't swooned away!
Smell my scortcht pelt purt' nigh now!
Well—to make a long tale short—
I hung on the blame disease
Like a shavin'-hoss! and sort
O' wore it out by slow degrees—
Tel my legs wuz straight enough
To poke through my pants again
And kick all the doctor-stuff
In the fi-er-place! Then turned in
And tuck Daddy Craig's old cuore—
Jis a buckeye—and that's *shore*.—
Hain't no case o' rhumatiz
Kin subsist whare buckeyes is!"

THE hoss he is a splendud beast;
He is man's friend, as heaven desined,
And, search the world from west to east,
No honester you'll ever find!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some calls the hoss "a pore dumb brute,"
And yit, like Him who died fer you,
I say, as I theyr charge refute,
"Fergive; they know not what they do!"

No wiser animal makes tracks
Upon these earthly shores, and hence
Arose the axium, true as facts,
Extoled by all, as "Good hoss-sense!"

The hoss is strong, and knows his stren'th,—
You hitch him up a time er two
And lash him, and he'll go his len'th
And kick the dashboard out fer you!

But, treat him allus good and kind,
And never strike him with a stick,
Ner aggervate him, and you'll find
He'll never do a hostile trick.

A hoss whose master tends him right
And worters him with daily care,
Will do your biddin' with delight,
And act as docile as *you* air.

He'll paw and prance to hear your praise,
Because he's learnt to love you well;
And, though you can't tell what he says,
He'll nicker all he wants to tell.

He knows you when you slam the gate
At early dawn, upon your way
Unto the barn, and snorts elate,
To git his corn, er oats, er hay.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He knows you, as the orphant knows
The folks that loves her like they own,
And raises her and "finds" her clothes,
And "schools" her tel a womern-grown!

I claim no hoss will harm a man,
Ner kick, ner run away, cavort,
Stump-suck, er balk, er "catamaran,"
Ef you'll jest treat him as you ort.

But when I see the beast abused,
And clubbed around as I've saw some,
I want to see his owner noosed,
And jest yanked up like Absolum!

Of course they's differunce in stock,—
A hoss that has a little yeer,
And slender build, and shaller hock,
Can beat his shadder, mighty near!

Whilse one that's thick in neck and christ
And big in leg and full in flank,
That tries to race, I still insist
He'll have to take the second rank.

And I have jest laid back and laughed,
And rolled and wallered in the grass
At fairs, to see some heavy-draft
Lead out at *first*, yit come in *last*!

Each hoss has his appinted place,—
The heavy hoss should plow the soil;—
The blooded racer, he must race,
And win big wages fer his toil.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I never bet—ner never wrought
Upon my feller man to bet—
And yit, at times, I've often thought
Of my convictions with regret.

I bless the hoss from hoof to head—
From head to hoof, and tale to mane!—
I bless the hoss, as I have said,
From head to hoof, and back again!

I love my God the first of all,
Then Him that perished on the cross,
And next, my wife,—and then I fall
Down on my knees and love the hoss.

23

Wet-Weather Talk

IT hain't no use to grumble and complane;
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
W'y, rain's my choice.

Men ginerly, to all intents—
Although they're apt to grumble some—
Puts most theyr trust in Providence,
And takes things as they come—
That is, the commonality
Of men that's lived as long as me
Has watched the world enough to learn
They're not the boss of this concern.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

With *some*, of course, it's different—
I've saw *young* men that knowed it all,
And didn't like the way things went
On this terrestchul ball;—
But all the same, the rain, some way,
Rained jest as hard on picnic day;
Er, when they raily *wanted* it,
It mayby wouldn't rain a bit!

In this existunce, dry and wet
Will overtake the best of men—
Some little skift o' clouds'll shet
The sun off now and then.—
And mayby, whilse you're wundern who
You've fool-like lent your umbrell' to,
And *want* it—out'll pop the sun,
And you'll be glad you hain't got none!

It aggervates the farmers, too—
They's too much wet, er too much sun,
Er work, er waitin' round to do
Before the plowin' 's done:
And mayby, like as not, the wheat,
Jest as it's lookin' hard to beat,
Will ketch the storm—and jest about
The time the corn's a-jintin' out.

These-here *cy-clones* a-foolin' round—
And back'ard crops!—and wind and rain!—
And yit the corn that's wallerd down
May elbow up again!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They hain't no sense, as I can see,
Fer mortuls, sich as us, to be
A-faultin' Natchur's wise intents,
And lockin' horns with Providence!

It hain't no use to grumble and complane;
It's jest as cheap and easy to rejoice.—
When God sorts out the weather and sends rain,
W'y, rain's my choice.

24

Ezra House

[These lines was writ, in ruther high sperits, jest at the close of what's called the Anti Bellum Days, and more to be a-foolin' than anything else,—though they is more er less facts in it. But some of the boys, at the time we was all a-singin' it, fer Ezry's benefit, to the old tune of "The Oak and the Ash and the Bonny Willer Tree," got it struck off in the weekly, without leave er lisence of mine; and so sence they's allus some of 'em left to rigg me about it yit, I might as well claim the thing right here and now, so here goes. I give it jest as it appeared, fixed up and grammatisized consider'ble, as the editer told me he took the liburty of doin', in that sturling old home paper THE ADVANCE—as sound a paper yit to-day and as stanch and abul as you'll find in a hunderd.]

COME listen, good people, while a story I do tell,
Of the sad fate of one which I knew so passing well;
He enlisted at McCordsville, to battle in the South,
And protect his country's union; his name was Ezra House.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He was a young school-teacher, and educated high
In regards to Ray's arithmetic, and also Algebra :
He give good satisfaction, but at his country's call
He dropped his position, his Algebra and all.

"It's oh, I'm going to leave you, kind scholars," he said—
For he wrote a composition the last day and read ;
And it brought many tears in the eyes of the school,
To say nothing of his sweetheart he was going to leave so
soon.

"I have many recollections to take with me away,
Of the merry transpirations in the schoolroom so gay ;
And of all that's past and gone I will never regret
I went to serve my country at the first of the outset !"

He was a good penman, and the lines that he wrote
On that sad occasion was too fine for me to quote,—
For I was there and heard it, and I ever will recall
It brought the happy tears to the eyes of us all.

And when he left, his sweetheart she fainted away,
And said she could never forget the sad day
When her lover so noble, and gallant and gay,
Said "Fare you well, my true love!" and went marching
away.

But he hadn't been gone for more than two months,
When the sad news come—"he was in a skirmish once,
And a cruel Rebel ball had wounded him full sore
In the region of the chin, through the canteen he wore."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But his health recruited up, and his wounds they got well,
But whilst he was in battle at Bull Run or Malvern Hill,
The news come again, so sorrowful to hear—
“A sliver from a bombshell cut off his right ear.”

But he stuck to the boys, and it's often he would write,
That “he wasn't afraid for his country to fight.”
But oh, had he returned on a furlough, I believe
He would not, to-day, have such cause to grieve.

For in another battle—the name I never heard—
He was guarding the wagons when an accident occurred,—
A comrade who was under the influence of drink,
Shot him with a musket through the right cheek, I think.

But his dear life was spared ; but it hadn't been for long,
Till a cruel Rebel colonel come riding along,
And struck him with his sword, as many do suppose,
For his cap-rim was cut off, and also his nose.

But Providence, who watches o'er the noble and the brave,
Snatched him once more from the jaws of the grave ;
And just a little while before the close of the war,
He sent his picture home to his girl away so far.

And she fell into decline, and she wrote in reply,
“She had seen his face again and was ready to die” ;
And she wanted him to promise, when she was in her tomb,
He would only visit that by the light of the moon.

But he never returned at the close of the war,
And the boys that got back said he hadn't the heart ;
But he got a position in a powder-mill, and said
He hoped to meet the doom that his country denied.

25 *A Pen-Pictur' of a Cert'in Frivolous Old Man*

MOST ontimely old man yit!
 'Pear-like sometimes he jest *tries*
 His fool-self, and takes the bitt
 In his teeth and jest de-fies
 All perpryties!—Lay and swet
 Doin' *nothin'*—only jest
 Sorto' speckillatun on
 Whare old summer-times is gone,
 And 'bout things that he loved best
 When a youngster! Heerd him say
Spring-times made him thataway—
 Speshully on *Sund'ys*—when
 Sun shines out and in again,
 And the lonesome old hens they
 Git off under the old kern-
 Bushes, and in deep concern
Talk-like to theyrselves, and scratch
 Kindo' absunt-minded, jest
 Like theyr thoughts was fur away
 In some neghbor's gyarden-patch
 Folks has tended keerfullest!
 Heerd the old man dwell on these
 Idys time and time again!—
 Heerd him claim that orchurd-trees
 Bloomin', put the mischief in
 His old hart sometimes that bad
 And owdacious that he "*had*
 To break loose *someway*," says he,
 "Ornry as I ust to be!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Heerd him say one time—when I
Was a sorto' standin' by,
And the air so still and clear,
Heerd the bell fer church clean here!—
Said: "Ef I could climb and set
On the old three-cornered rail
Old home-place, nigh Maryette',
Swop my soul off, hide and tale!"
And-sir I blame ef tear and laugh
Didn't ketch him half and half!
"Oh!" he says, "to wake and be
Barefoot, in the airly dawn
In the pastur'!—thare," says he,
"Standin' whare the cow's slep' on
The cold, dewy grass that's got
Print of her jest steamy hot
Fer to warm a feller's heels
In a while!—How good it feels!
Sund'y!—Country!—Morning!—Hear
Nothin' but the *silunce*—see
Nothin' but green woods and clear
Skies and unwrit poetry
By the acre! . . . Oh!" says he,
"What's this voice of mine?—to seek
To speak out, and yit *can't* speak!"

"Think!—the lazyest of days"—
Takin' his contrairiest leap,
He went on,—“git up, er sleep—
Er whilse feedin', watch the haze
Dancin' crost the wheat,—and keep

THE HOOSIER BOOK

My pipe goin' laisurely—
Puff and whiff as pleases me,—
Er I'll leave a trail of smoke
Through *the house!*—no one'll say
'*Throw that nasty thing away!*'
'Pear-like nothin' sacerd's broke,
Goin' barefoot ef I chuse!—
I *have fiddled*;—and dug bait
And *went fishin'*;—pitched hoss-shoes—
Whare they couldn't see us from
The main road.—And I've *beat* some.
I've set round and had my joke
With the thrashers at the barn—
And I've swapped 'em yarn fer yarn!—
Er I've he'pped the childern poke
Fer hens'-nests—agged on a match
'Twixt the boys, to watch 'em scratch
And paw round and rip and tare,
And bu'st buttons and pull hair
To theyr rompin' harts' content—
And me jest a-settin' thare
Hatchin' out more devilment!

"What you s'pose now ort to be
Done with sich a man?" says he—
"Sich a fool-old-man as me!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

26

Thoughts on a Pore Joke

I LIKE fun—and I like jokes
'Bout as well as most o' folks!—
Like my joke, and like my fun;—
But a joke, I'll state right here,
'S got some p'int—er I don't keer
Fer no joke that hain't got none.—
I hain't got no use, I'll say,
Fer a *pore* joke, anyway!

F'r instance, now, when *some* folks gits
To relyin' on theyr wits,
Ten to one they git too smart
And *spile* it all, right at the start!
Feller wants to jest go slow
And do his *thinkin'* first, you know.
'F I can't think up somepin' good,
I set still and chaw my cood!
'F you *think* nothin'—jest keep on,
But don't *say* it—er you're gone!

27

A Mortul Prayer

O H! Thou that veileth from all eyes
The glory of Thy face,
And setteth throned behind the skies
In Thy abiding-place:
Though I but dimly reco'nize
Thy purposes of grace;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And though with weak and wavering
Deserts, and vexed with fears,
I lift the hands I can not wring
All dry of sorrow's tears,
Make pure my prayers that daily wing
Their way unto Thy ears!

Oh! with the hand that tames the flood
And smooths the storm to rest,
Make ba'mmy dews of all the blood
That stormeth in my brest,
And so refresh my hart to bud
And bloom the loveliest.
Lull all the clammer of my soul
To silence; bring release
Unto the brane still in controule
Of doubts; bid sin to cease,
And let the waves of pashun roll
And kiss the shores of peace.

Make me love my feller man—
Yea, though his bitterness
Doth bite as only adders can—
Let *me* the fault confess,
And go to him and clasp his hand
And love him none the less.
So keep me, Lord, ferever free
From vane concete er whim;
And he whose pious eyes can see
My faults, however dim,—
Oh! let him pray the least fer me,
And me the most fer him.

The First Bluebird

JEST rain and snow! and rain again!
 And dribble! drip! and blow!
 Then snow! and thaw! and slush! and then—
 Some more rain and snow!

This morning I was 'most afeard
 To wake up—when, I jing!
 I seen the sun shine out and heerd
 The first bluebird of Spring!—
 Mother she'd raised the winder some;—
 And in acrost the orchurd come,
 Soft as a' angel's wing,
 A breezy, treesy, beesy hum,
 Too sweet fer anything!

The winter's shroud was rent apart—
 The sun bu'st forth in glee,—
 And when *that bluebird* sung, my hart
 Hopped out o' bed with me!

29 *On Any Ordenary Man In a High
 State of Laughture and Delight*

AS it's give' me to perceive,
 I most cert'in'y believe
 When a man's jest glad plum through,
 God's pleased with him, same as you.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

30

Town and Country

THEY'S a prejudice allus 'twixt country and town
Which I wisht in my hart wasent so.
You take *city* people, jest square up and down,
And they're mighty good people to know :
And whare's better people a-livin', to-day,
Than us in the *country*?—Yit good
As both of us is, we're divorsed, you might say,
And won't compermise when we could !

Now as nigh into town fer yer Pap, ef you please,
Is what's called the sooburbs.—Fer thare
You'll at least ketch a whiff of the breeze and a sniff
Of the breth of wild-flowrs ev'rywhare.
They's room fer the childern to play, and grow, too—
And to roll in the grass, er to climb
Up a tree and rob nests, like they *ortent* to do,
But they'll do *anyhow* ev'ry time !

My Son-in-law said, when he lived in the town,
He jest natchurly pined, night and day,
Fer a sight of the woods, er a acre of ground
Whare the trees wasent all cleared away !
And he says to me onc't, whilse a-visitin' us
On the farm, "It's not strange, I declare,
That we can't coax you folks, without raisin' a fuss,
To come to town, visitin' thare !"

And says I, "Then git back whare you sorto' *belong*—
And *Madaline*, too,—and yer three
Little childern," says I, "that don't know a bird-song,
Ner a hawk from a chicky-dee-dee !

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Git back," I-says-I, "to the blue of the sky
And the green of the fields, and the shine
Of the sun, with a laugh in yer voice and yer eye
As harty as Mother's and mine!"

Well—long-and-short of it,—he's compermised *some*—
He's moved in the sooburbs.—And now
They don't haf to coax, when they want us to come,
'Cause we turn in and go *anyhow*!
Fer thare—well, they's room fer the songs and purfume
Of the grove and the old orchurd-ground,
And they's room fer the childern out thare, and they's
room
Fer theyr Gran'pap to waller 'em round!

31 *Decoration Day on the Place*

IT'S lonesome—sorto' lonesome,—it's a *Sund'y-day*, to
me,
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—
Yit, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the air,
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

They say, though, Decoration Day is giner'ly observed
'Most *ev'rywhares*—espeshally by soldier-boys that's
served.—

But me and Mother's never went—we seldom git away,—
In p'int o' fact, we're *allus* home on *Decoration Day*.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They say the old boys marches through the streets in
colum's grand,
A-follerin' the old war-tunes they're playin' on the band—
And citizuns all jinin' in—and little childern, too—
All marchin', under shelter of the old Red White and
Blue.—

With roses! roses! roses!—ev'rybody in the town!—
And crowds o' little girls in white, jest fairly loaded
down!—
Oh! don't THE BOYS know it, from their camp acrost the
hill?—
Don't they see their com'ards comin' and the old flag
wavin' still?

Oh! can't they hear the bugul and the rattle of the drum?—
Ain't they no way under heavens they can rickollect us
some?
Ain't they no way we can coax 'em, through the roses, jest
to say
They know that ev'ry day on earth's their Decoration Day?

We've tried that—me and Mother,—whare Elias takes his
rest,
In the orchurd—in his uniform, and hands acrost his brest,
And the flag he died fer, smilin' and a-rippin' in the breeze
Above his grave—and over that,—*the robin in the trees!*

And *yit* it's lonesome—lonesome!—It's a *Sund'y-day*, to *me*,
It 'pears-like—more'n any day I nearly ever see!—
Still, with the Stars and Stripes above, a-flutterin' in the
air,
On ev'ry Soldier's grave I'd love to lay a lily thare.

32 *The Rossville Lectur' Course*

[Set down from the real facts of the case that come under notice of the author whilse visitun far distunt relatives who wuz then residin' at Rossville, Mich.]

FOLKS up here at Rossville got up a Lectur' Course:—
 All the leadin' citizens they wuz out in force;
 Met and talked at Williamses', and 'greed to meet ag'in;
 And helt another corkus when the next reports wuz in:
 Met ag'in at Samuelses'; and met ag'in at Moore's
 And Jolnts putt the shutters up and jest barr'd the door!—
 And yit, I'll jest be dagg-don'd! ef't didn't take a week!
 'Fore we'd settled whare to write to git a man to speak!

Found out whare the "Bureau" wuz; and then and thare
 agreed

To strike whilse the iron's hot and foller up the lead.—
 Simp wuz Secatary; so he tuk his pen in hand,
 And ast 'em what they'd tax us fer the one on "Holy
 Land"—

"One of Colonel J. De-Koombs's Abelust and Best
 Lectur's," the circ'lar stated, "Give East er West!"
 Wahted fifty dollars and his kyar-fare to and from,
 And Simp wuz hence instructed fer to write him not to
 come.

Then we talked and jawed around another week er so,
 And writ the "Bureau" 'bout the town a-bein' sorto' slow—
 Old-fogey-like, and pore as dirt, and lackin' interprise
 And ignornter'n any other, 'cordin' to its size:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tel finully the "*Bureau*" said they'd send a cheaper man
Fer forty dollars, who would give "A Talk About Japan"—
"A reg'lar Japanee hise'f," the pamphlet claimed; and so,
Nobody knowed his language, and of course we let him go!

Kindo' then let up a spell—but rallied onc't ag'in,
And writ to price a feller on what's called the "violin"—
A Swede, er Pole, er somepin'—but no matter what he wuz,
Doc Cooper said he'd heerd him, and he wuzn't wuth a
kuss!

And then we ast fer *Swingse's* terms; and *Cook*, and
Ingersoll—

And blame! ef forty dollars looked like anything at all!
And then *Burdette*, we tried fer *him*; and Bob he writ to
say

He wuz busy writin' ortographts and couldn't git away.

At last—along in Aprile—we signed to take this-here
Bill Nye of Californy, 'at wuz posted to appear
"The Comicalest Funny Man 'at Ever Jammed a Hall!"
So we made big preperations, and swep' out the church and
all!

And night he wuz to lectur', and the neighbors all wuz
thare,

And strangers packed along the aisles 'at come from ev'ry-
whare,

Committee got a telegraph the preacher read, 'at run—
"Got off at Rossville, *Indiany*, 'stid of Michigan."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

33

A Dos't o' Blues

I GOT no patience with blues at all!
And I ust to kind o' talk
Ag'inst 'em, and claim, tel along last Fall,
They wuz none in the fambly stock;
But a nephew of mine, from Eelinoy,
That visitud us last year,
He kind o' convinct me differunt
Whilse he wuz a-stayin' here.

From ev'ry-which-way that blues is from,
They'd pester him *ev'ry*-ways;
They'd come to him in the night, and come
On Sund'ys, and rainy days;
They'd tackle him in corn-plantin' time,
And in harvest, and airy Fall,—
But a dos't o' blues in the *Winter*-time,
He 'lowed, wuz the worst of all!

Said "All diseases that ever *he* had—
The mumps, er the rhumatiz—
Er ev'ry-other-day-aigger—bad
As ever the blame thing is!—
Er a cyarbuncle, say, on the back of his neck,
Er a felon on his thumb,—
But you keep *the blues* away from him,
And all o' the rest could come!"

And he'd moan, "They's nary a leaf below!
Ner a spear o' grass in sight!
And the whole wood-pile's clean upder snow!
And the days is dark as night!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

You can't go out—ner you can't stay in—
Lay down—stand up—ner set!"
And a tetch o' regular tyfoid-blues
Would double him jest clean shet!

I writ his parunts a postal-kyard
He could stay tel Spring-time come;
And Aprile—*first*, as I rickollect—
Wuz the day we shipped him home!
Most o' his *relatives*, sence then,
Has eether give up, er quit,
Er jest died off; but I understand
He's the same old color yit!

34

Pap's Old Sayin'

PAP had one old-fashioned sayin'
That I'll never quite fergit—
And they's seven grewed-up childern
Of us rickollects it yit!—
Settin' round the dinner-table,
Talkin' 'bout our friends, perhaps,
Er abusin' of our neighbors,
I kin hear them words o' Pap's—
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Pap he'd never argy with us,
Ner cut any subject short
Whilse we all kep' clear o' gossip;
And wuz actin' as we ort:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But ef we'd git out o' order—
Like sometimes a fambly is,—
Faultin' folks, er one another,
Then we'd hear that voice o' his—
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Wuz no hand hisse'f at talkin'—
Never hadn't *much* to say,—
Only, as I said, pervidin'
When we'd rile him thataway:
Then he'd allus lose his temper
Spite o' fate, and jerk his head
And slam down his case-knife vicious,
Whilse he glared around and said—
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Mind last time 'at Pap was ailin'
With a misery in his side,
And had hobbled in the kitchen—
Jest the day before he died,—
Laury Jane she ups and tells him,
"Pap, you're pale as pale kin be—
Hain't ye 'feard them-air cowncubers
Hain't good fer ye?" And says he,
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

Well! I've saw a-many a-sorrow,—
Forty year', through thick and thin;
I've got best,—and I've got *worsted*,
Time and time and time ag'in!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But I've met a-many a trouble
That I hain't run on to twice,
Haltin'-like and thinkin' over
Them-air words o' Pap's advice:
"Shet up, and eat yer vittels!"

35

An Old Man's Memory

THE delights of our childhood is soon passed away,
And our gloryus youth it departs,—
And yit, dead and burried, they's blossoms of May
Ore theyr medderland graves in our harts.
So, friends of my barefooted days on the farm,
Whether truant in city er not,
God prosper you same as He's prosperin' me,
Whilse your past hain't despised er forgot.

Oh! they's nothin', at morn, that's as grand unto me
As the glories of Natchur so fare,—
With the Spring in the breeze, and the bloom in the trees,
And the hum of the bees ev'rywhare!
The green in the woods, and the birds in the boughs,
And the dew spangled over the fields;
And the bah of the sheep and the bawl of the cows
And the call from the house to your meals!

Then ho! fer your brekfast! and ho! fer the toil
That waiteth alike man and beast!
Oh! it's soon with my team I'll be turnin' up soil,
Whilse the sun shoulders up in the East

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ore the tops of the ellums and beeches and oaks,
To smile his Godspeed on the plow,
And the furry and seed, and the Man in his need,
And the joy of the swet of his brow!

36 *Lines to Perfesser John Clark Ridpath*

A. M., LL. D. T-Y-TY!

[*Cumposed by A Old Friend of the Fambily sence 'way
back in the Forties, when they Settled nigh Fillmore, Put-
nam County, this State, whare John was borned and growed
up, you might say, like the wayside flower.*]

YOUR neighbors in the country, whare you come from,
hain't fergot!—

We knowed you even better than your own-self, like as not.
We profissied your runnin'-geers 'ud stand a soggy load
And pull her, purty stiddy, up a mighty rocky road:
We been a-watchin' your career sence you could write your
name—

But way you writ it *first*, I'll say, was jest a burnin'
shame!—

Your "J. C." in the copy-book, and "Ridpath"—mercy-
sakes!—

Quiled up and tide in dubble bows, lookt like a nest o'
snakes!—

But you could read it, I *suppose*, and kindo' gloted on
A-bein' "*J. C. Ridpath*" when *we* only called you "*John*"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But you'd work's well as fool, and what you had to do was
done:

We've watched you at the wood-pile—not the ~~wood-shed~~—
wasent none,—

And snow and sleet, and haulin', too, and lookin' after
stock,

And milkin', nights, and feedin' pigs,—then turnin' back the
clock,

So's you could set up studyin' your 'Rethmatic, and fool
Your 'Parents, whilse a-piratin' your way through winter
school!

And I've heerd tell—from your own folks—you've set and
baked your face

A-readin' Plutark Slives all night by that old fi-er-place.—

Yit, 'bout them times, the blackboard, onc't, had on it, I
de-clare,

"Yours truly, *J. Clark* Ridpath."—And the teacher—left
it thare!

And they was other symptums, too, that pinted, plane as
day,

To nothin' short of *College!*—and *one* was the lovin' way
Your mother had of cheerin' you to efforts brave and
strong,

And puttin' more faith in you, as you needed it along:
She'd pat you on the shoulder, er she'd grab you by the
hands,

And *laugh* sometimes, er *cry* sometimes.—They's few that
understands

Jest *what* theyr mother's drivin' at when they act that
away;—

But I'll say this fer you, John-Clark,—you answered, night
and day,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

To ev'ry trust and hope of hers—and half your College
fame

Was battled fer and won fer her and glory of her name.

The likes of you at College! But you went thare. How
you paid

Your way nobody's astin'—but you *worked*,—you hain't
afraid,—

Your *clothes* was, more'n likely, kindo' out o' style, perhaps;
And not as snug and warm as some 'at hid the other
chaps;—

But when it come to *Intullect*—they tell me you'n was
dressed

A *leetle* mite *superber*-like than any of the rest!

And there you *stayed*—and thare you've made your rickord,
fare and square—

Tel *now* it's *Fame* 'at writes your name, approvin', *ev'ry*
whare—

Not *jibblits* of it, nuther,—but all John Clark Ridpath,
set

Plum at the dashboard of the whole-endurin' Alfabet!

37 *Us Farmers in the Country*

U S farmers in the country, as the seasons go and
come,

Is purty much like other folks,—we're apt to grumble some!

The Spring's too back'ard fer us, er too for'ard—ary one—

We'll jaw about it anyhow, and have our way er none!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The thaw's set in too suddent; er the frost's stayed in the
soil

Too long to give the wheat a chance, and crops is bound to
spoil.

The weather's eether most too mild, er too outrageous
rough,

And altogether too much rain, er not half rain enough!

Now what I'd like and what you'd like is plane enough to
see:

It's jest to have old Providence drop round on you and me
And ast us what our views is first, regardin' shine er rain,
And post 'em when to shet her off, er let her on again!

And yit I'd ruther, after all—consider'n' other chores
I' got on hands, a-tendin' both to my affares and yours—
I'd ruther miss the blame I'd git, a-rulin' things up thare,
And spend my extry time in praise and gratitude and
prayer.

AFTERWHILES

38

A Home-Made Fairy Tale

BUD, come here to your uncle a spell,
And I'll tell you something you mustn't tell—
For it's a secret and shore-'nuf true,
And maybe I oughtn't to tell it to you!—
But out in the garden, under the shade
Of the apple-trees, where we romped and played
Till the moon was up, and you thought I'd gone
Fast asleep,—That was all put on!
For I was a-watchin' something queer
Goin' on there in the grass, my dear!—
'Way down deep in it, there I see
A little dude-Fairy who winked at me,
And snapped his fingers, and laughed as low
And fine as the whine of a mus-kee-to!
I kept still—watchin' him closer—and
I noticed a little guitar in his hand,
Which he leant 'g'inst a little dead bee—and laid
His cigarette down on a clean grass-blade,
And then climbed up on the shell of a snail—
Carefully dusting his swallowtail—
And pulling up, by a waxed web-thread,
This little guitar, you remember, I said!
And there he trinkled and thrilled a tune,—
"My Love, so Fair, Tans in the Moon!"
Till, presently, out of the clover-top
He seemed to be singing to, came, k'pop!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The purtiest, daintiest Fairy face
In all this world, or any place!
Then the little ser'nader waved his hand,
As much as to say, "We'll excuse *you*!" and
I heard, as I squinted my eyelids to,
A kiss like the drip of a drop of dew!

39

Old-Fashioned Roses

THEY ain't no style about 'em,
And they're sort o' pale and faded,
Yit the doorway here, without 'em,
Would be lonesomer, and shaded
With a good 'eal blacker shadder
Than the morning-glories makes,
And the sunshine would look sadder
Fer their good old-fashion' sakes.

I like 'em 'cause they kind o'
Sort o' *make* a feller like 'em!
And I tell you, when I find a
Bunch out whur the sun kin strike 'em,
It allus sets me thinkin'
O' the ones 'at used to grow
And peek in thro' the chinkin'
O' the cabin, don't you know!

And then I think o' mother,
And how she ust to love 'em—
When they wuzn't any other,
'Less she found 'em up above 'em!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And her eyes, afore she shut 'em,
Whispered with a smile and said
We must pick a bunch and putt 'em
In her hand when she wuz dead.

But, as I wuz a-sayin',
They ain't no style about 'em.
Very gaudy er displayin',
But I wouldn't be without 'em—
'Cause I'm happier in these posies,
And the hollyhawks and sich,
Than the hummin'-bird 'at noses
In the roses of the rich.

40

Griggsby's Station

PAP'S got his pattent-right, and rich as all creation;
But where's the peace and comfort that we all had
before?

Le's go a-visitin' back to Griggsby's Station—

Back where we ust to be so happy and so pore!

The likes of us a-livin' here! It's jest a mortal pity
To see us in this great big house, with cyarpets on the
stairs,
And the pump right in the kitchen! And the city! city!
city!—
And nothin' but the city all around us ever'wheres!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

II

Orchard's where I'd ruther be—
Needn't fence it in fer me!—
Jes' the whole sky overhead,
And the whole airth underneath—
Sort o' so's a man kin breathe
Like he ort, and kind o' has
Elbow-room to keerlessly
Sprawl out len'thways on the grass
Where the shadders thick and soft
As the kivvers on the bed
Mother fixes in the loft
Allus, when they's company!

III

Jes' a-sort o' lazin' there—
S'lazy, 'at you peek and peer
Through the wavin' leaves above,
Like a feller 'at's in love
And don't know it, ner don't keer!
Ever'thing you hear and see
Got some sort o' interest—
Maybe find a bluebird's nest
Tucked tip there conveenently
Fer the boy 'at's ap' to be
Up some other apple-tree!
Watch the swallers skootin' past
'Bout as peert as you could ast;
Er the Bob-white raise and whiz
Where some other's whistle is.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

IV

Ketch a shadder down below,
And look up to find the crow—
Er a hawk,—away up there,
'Pearantly froze in the air!—
Hear the old hen squawk, and squat
Over ever' chick she's got,
Sudden-like!—and she knows where
That-air hawk is, well as you!—
You jes' bet yer life she do!—
Eyes a-glitterin' like glass,
Waitin' till he makes a pass!

V

Pee-wees' singin', to express
My opinion, 's second class,
Yit you'll hear 'em more er less;
Sapsucks gittin' down to biz,
Weedin' out the lonesomeness;
Mr. Bluejay, full o' sass,
In them base-ball clothes o' his,
Sportin' round the orchard jes'
Like he owned the premises!
Sun out in the fields kin sizz,
But flat on yer back, I guess,
In the shade's where glory is!
That's jes' what I'd like to do
Stiddy fer a year er two!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

VI

Plague! ef they ain't somepin' in
Work 'at kind o' goes ag'in'
My convictions!—'long about
Here in June especially!—
Under some old apple-tree,
Jes' a-restin' through and through,
I could git along without
Nothin' else at all to do
Only jes' a-wishin' you
Wuz a-gittin' there like me,
And June was eternity!

VII

Lay out there and try to see
Jes' how lazy you kin be!—
Tumble round and souse yer head
In the clover-bloom, er pull
Yer straw hat acrost yer eyes
And peek through it at the skies,
Thinkin' of old chums 'at's dead,
Maybe, smilin' back at you
In betwixt the beautiful
Clouds o' gold and white and blue!—
Month a man kin railly love—
June, you know, I'm talkin' of!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

VIII

March ain't never nothin' new!—

Aprile's altogether too

Brash fer me! and May—I jes'

'Bominate its promises,—

! Little hints o' sunshine and

Green around the timber-land—

A few blossoms, and a few

Chip-birds, and a sprout er two,—

Drap asleep, and it turns in

'Fore daylight and *snows* ag'in!—

But when *June* comes—Clear my th'roat

With wild honey!—Rench my hair

In the dew! and hold my coat!

Whoop out loud! and th'ow my hat!—

June wants me, and I'm to spare!

Spread them shadders anywhere,

I'll git down and waller there,

And obleeged to you at that!

42 *When the Hearse Comes Back*

A THING 'at's 'bout as tryin' as a healthy man kin meet
Is some poor feller's funeral a-joggin' 'long the street!
The slow hearse and the hosses—slow enough, to say the
least,

Fer to even tax the patience of the gentleman deceased!
The low scrunch of the gravel—and the slow grind of the
wheels,—

The slow, slow go of ev'ry woe 'at ev'rybody feels!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So I ruther like the contrast when I hear the whip-lash
crack

A quickstep fer the hosses,

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!

Meet it goin' to'ards the cimet'ry, you'll want to drap yer
eyes—

But ef the plumes don't fetch you, it'll ketch you other-
wise—

You'll haf to see the caskit, though you'd ort to look away
And 'conomize and save yer sighs fer any other day!

Yer sympathizin' won't wake up the sleeper from his rest—

Yer tears won't thaw them hands o' his 'at's froze acrost
his breast!

And this is why—when airth and sky's a-gittin' blurred and
black—

I like the flash and hurry

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!

It's not 'cause I don't 'preciate it ain't no time fer jokes,
Ner 'cause I' got no common human feelin' fer the folks;—
I've went to funerals mys'ef, and tuk on some, perhaps—
Fer my heart's 'bout as malleable as any other chap's,—
I've buried father, mother—But I'll haf to jes' git you
To "excuse me," as the feller says.—The p'int I'm drivin' to

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Is, simply, when we're plum broke down and all knocked
out o' whack,

It he'ps to shape us up, like,

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!

The idy! wadin' round here over shoe-mouth deep in woe,
When they's a graded 'pike o' joy and sunshine, don't you
know!

When evening strikes the pastur', cows'll pull out fer the
bars,

And skittish-like from oat the night'll prance the happy
stars.

And so when *my* time comes to die, and I've got ary friend
'At wants expressed my last request—I'll, mebb'y, rickom-
mend

To drive slow, ef they haf to, goin' 'long the *out'ard* track,
But I'll smile and say, "You speed 'em

When the

Hearse

Comes

Back!"

43

A Canary at the Farm

FOLKS has be'n to town, and Sahry
Fetched 'er home a pet canary,—
And of all the blame', contrary,
Aggervatin' things alive!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I love music—that's I love it
When it's *free*—and plenty of it;—
But I kindo' git above it,
At a dollar-eighty-five!

Reason's plain as I'm a-sayin'—
Jes' the idy, now, o' layin'
Out yer money, and a-payin'
Fer a willer-cage and bird,
When the medder-larks is wingin'
Round you, and the woods is ringin'
With the beautifullest singin'
That a mortal ever heard!

Sahry's sot, tho'.—So I tell her
He's a purty little feller,
With his wings o' creamy-yeller,
And his eyes keen as a cat;
And the twitter o' the critter
'Pears to absolutely glitter!
Guess I'll haf to go and git her
A high-priceter cage 'n that!

44

A Liz-Town Humorist

SETTIN' round the stove, last night,
Down at Wess's store, was me
And Mart Strimples, Tunk, and White,
And Doc Bills, and two er three
Fellers o' the Mudsock tribe
No use tryin' to describe!
And says Doc, he says, says he,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Talkin' 'bout good things to eat,
Ripe mushmillon's hard to beat!"

I chawed on. And Mart he 'lowed
Wortermillon beat the mush.—
"Red," he says, "and juicy—Hush!—
I'll jes' leave it to the crowd!"
Then a Mudsock chap, says he,—
"Punkin's good enough fer me—
Punkin pies, I mean," he says,—
"Them beats millons!—What say, Wess?"

I chawed on. And Wess says,—"Well,
You jes' fetch that wife of mine
All yer wortermillon-*rine*,—
And she'll bile it down a spell—
In with sorghum, I suppose,
And what else, Lord only knows!—
But I'm here to tell all hands
Them p'serves meets my demands!"

I chawed on. And White he says,—
"Well, I'll jes' stand in with Wess—
I'm no hog!" And Tunk says,—"I
Guess I'll pastur' out on pie
With the Mudsock boys!" says he;
"Now what's yourn?" he says to me:
I chawed on—fer—quite a spell—
Then I speaks up, slow and dry,—
"Jes' tobacker!" I-says-I.—
And you'd ort o' heerd 'em yell!

Kingry's Mill

ON old Brandywine—about
Where White's Lots is now laid out
And the old crick narries down
To the ditch that splits the town,—
Kingry's Mill stood. Hardly see
Where the old dam ust to be;
Shallor, long, dryrought o' grass
Where the old race ust to pass!

That's be'n forty years ago—
Forty years o' frost and snow—
Forty years o' shade and shine
Sence them boyhood-days o' mine!—
All the old landmarks o' town
Changed about, er rotted down!
Where's the Tanyard? Where's the Still?
Tell me where's old Kingry's Mill?

Don't seem funder back, to me,
I'll be dogg'd! than yisterd'y,
Since us fellers, in bare feet
And straw hats, went through the wheat,
Cuttin' 'crost the shortest shoot
Fer that-air old ellum root
Jest above the mill-dam—where
The blame' cars now crosses there!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Through the willers down the crick
We could see the old mill stick
Its red gable up, as if
It jest knowed we'd stol'd the skiff!
See the winders in the sun
Blink like they wuz wunderun'
What the miller ort to do
With sich boys as me and you!

But old Kingry!—who could fear
That old chap, with all his cheer?—
Leanin' at the winder-sill,
Er the half-door o' the mill,
Swappin' lies, and pokin' fun,
'N' jigglin' like his hoppers done—
Laughin' grists o' gold and red
Right out o' the wagon-bed!

What did *he* keer where we went?—
"Jest keep out o' devilment,
And don't fool around the belts,
Bolts, ner burrs, ner nothin' else
'Bout the blame *machinery*,
And that's all I ast!" says-ee.
Then we'd climb the stairs, and play
In the bran-bins half the day!

Rickollect the dusty wall,
And the spider-webs, and all!
Rickollect the trimblin' spout
Where the meal come josslin' out—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Stand and comb yer fingers through
The fool-truck an hour er two—
Felt so sort o' warm-like and
Soothin' to a feller's hand!

Climb, high up above the stream,
And "coon" out the wobbly beam
And peek down from out the lof'
Where the weather-boards was off—
Gee-mun-*nee*! w'y, it takes grit
Even jest to think of it!—
Lookin' way down there below
On the worter roarin' so!

Rickollect the flume, and wheel,
And the worter slosh and reel
And jest ravel out in froth
Flossier'n satin cloth!
Rickollect them paddles jest
Knock the bubbles galley-west,
And plunge under, and come up,
Drippin' like a worter-pup!

And, to see them old things gone
That I onc't was bettin' on,
In rale p'int o' fact, I feel
Kind o' like that worter-wheel,—
Sort o' drippy-like and wet
Round the eyes—but paddlin' yet,
And, in mem'ry, loafin' still
Down around old Kingry's Mill!

HAD a harelip—Joney had :
 Spiled his looks and Joney knowed it :
 Fellers tried to bore him, bad—
 But ef ever he got mad,
 He kep' still and never showed it.
 'Druther have his mouth all pouted
 And split up, and like it wuz,
 Than the ones 'at laughed about it.—
 Purty is as purty does !

Had to listen ruther clos't
 'Fore you knowed what he wuz givin'
 You ; and yet, without no boast,
 Joney he wuz jest the most
 Entertainin' talker livin' !
 Take the Scriptur's and run through 'em,
 Might say, like a' auctioneer,
 And 'ud argy and review 'em
 'At wuz beautiful to hear !

Harelip and impediment,
 Both wuz bad and both ag'in' him—
 But the *old folks* where he went,
 'Peared like, knowin' his intent,
 'Scused his mouth fer what wuz in him.
 And *the children* all loved Joney—
 And he loved 'em back, you bet !—
 Putt their arms around him—on'y
 None had ever kissed him yet !

THE HOOSIER BOOK

In young company, someway,
Boys 'ud grin at one another
On the sly; and girls 'ud lay
Low, with nothin' much to say,
Er leave Joney with their mother.
Many and many a time he's fetched 'em
Candy by the paper-sack,
And turned right around and ketched 'em
Makin' mouths behind his back!

S'prised, sometimes, the slurs he took—
Chap said onc't his mouth looked sorter
Like a fish's mouth 'ud look
When he'd be'n jerked off the hook
And plunked back into the worter.—
Same durn feller—it's su'prisin',
But it's facts—'at stood and cherred
From the bank that big babtizin'
'Pike-bridge accident occurred!—

Cherred for Joney while he give
Life to little childern drownin'!
Which wuz fittestest to live—
Him 'at cherred, er him 'at div'
And saved thirteen lives? . . . They found one
Body, three days later, floated
Down the by-o, eight mile' south,
All so colored-up and bloated—
On'y knowed him by his mouth!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Had a harelip—Joney had—
Folks 'at filed apast all knowed it.—
Them 'at ust to smile looked sad,
But ef *he* thought good er bad,
He kep' still and never showed it.
'Druther have that mouth, all pouted
And split up, and like it wuz,
Than the ones 'at laughed about it.—
Purty is as purty does !

47

Granny

GRANNY'S come to our house,
And ho ! my lawzy-daisy !
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy !
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,
And fetched a pear fer all the pack
That runs to kiss their Granny !

Lucy Ellen's in her lap,
And Wade and Silas Walker.
Both's a-ridin' on her foot,
And 'Pollos on the rocker ;
And Marthy's twins, from Aunt Marinn's,
And little Orphant Annie,
All's a-eatin' gingerbread
And giggle-un at Granny !

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tells us all the fairy tales
Ever thought er wundered—
And 'bundance o' other stories—
Bet she knows a hunderd!—
Bob's the one fer "Whittington,"
And "Golden Locks" fer Fanny!
Hear 'em laugh and clap their hands,
Listenin' at Granny!

"Jack the Giant-Killer" 's good;
And "Bean-Stalk" 's another!—
So's the one of "Cinderell"
And her old godmother;—
That-un's best of all the rest—
Bestest one of any,—
Where the mices scampers home
Like we runs to Granny!

Granny's come to our house,
Ho! my lawzy-daisy!
All the childern round the place
Is ist a-runnin' crazy!
Fetched a cake fer little Jake,
And fetched a pie fer Nanny,
And fetched a pear fer all the pack
That runs to kiss their Granny!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

48

The Train-Misser

AT UNION STATION

'**L** where in the world my eyes has bin—
Ef I hain't missed that train ag'in!
Chuff! and whistle! and toot! and ring!
But blast and blister the dasted train!—
How it does it I can't explain!
Git here thirty-five minutes before
The durn thing's due!—and, drat the thing!
It'll manage to git past—shore!

The more I travel around, the more
I got no sense!—To stand right here
And let it beat me! 'Ll ding my melts!
I got no gumption, ner nothin' else!
Ticket Agent's a dad-burned bore!—
Sell you a ticket's all they keer!—
Ticket Agents ort to all be
Prosecuted—and that's jes' what!—
How'd I know which train's fer me?
And how'd I know which train was not?—
Goern and comin' and gone astray,
And backin' and switchin' ever'-which-way!

Ef I could jes' sneak round behind
Myse'f, where I could git full swing,
I'd lift my coat, and kick, by jing!
Till I jes' got jerked up and fined!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fer here I stood, as a durn fool's apt
To, and let that train jes' chuff and choo
Right apast me—and mouth jes' gapped
Like a blamed old sandwitch warped in two!

49 *Like His Mother Used to Make*

"UNCLE JAKE'S PLACE," ST. JO, MISSOURI, 1874

"**I** WAS born in Indiany," says a stranger lank and slim,
As us fellers in the restarunt was kind o' guyin' him,
And Uncle Jake was slidin' him another punkin pie
And a' extry cup o' coffee, with a twinkle in his eye,—
"I was born in Indiany—more'n forty year' ago—
And I hain't be'n back in twenty—and I'm workin' back-
ards slow;
But I've et in ever' restarunt 'twixt here and Santy Fee,
And I want to state this coffee tastes like gittin' home, to
me!

"Pour us out another, Daddy," says the feller, warmin' up,
A-speakin' 'crost a saucerful, as Uncle tuk his cup,—
"When I seed yer sign out yander," he went on, to Uncle
Jake,—

"Come in and git some coffee like yer mother used to
make'—

I thought of *my* old mother, and the Posey County farm,
And me a little kid ag'in, a-hangin' in her arm,
As she set the pot a-bilin', broke the eggs and poured 'em
in"—

And the feller kind o' halted, with a trimble in his chin:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Uncle Jake he fetched the feller's coffee back, and
stood
As solemn, fer a minute, as a' undertaker would;
Then he sort o' turned and tiptoed to'rds the kitchen door
and nex',
Here comes his old wife out with him, a-rubbin' of her
specs—
And she rushes fer the stranger, and she hollers out, "It's
him!—
Thank God we've met him comin'!—Don't you know yer
mother, Jim?"
And the feller, as he grabbed her, says,—“You bet I hain't
forgot—
But,” wipin' of his eyes, says he, “yer coffee's mighty hot!”

50

Old October

OLD October's purt' nigh gone,
And the frosts is comin' on
Little *heavier* every day—
Like our hearts is thataway!
Leaves is changin' overhead
Back from green to gray and red
Brown and yellor, with their stems
Loosenin' on the oaks and e'ms;
And the balance of the trees
Gittin' balder every breeze—
Like the heads we're scratchin' on!
Old October's purt' nigh gone.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I love Old October so,
I can't bear to see her go—
Seems to me like losin' some
Old-home relative er chum—
'Pears like sort o' settin' by
Some old friend 'at sigh by sigh
Was a-passin' out o' sight
Into everlastin' night!
Hickernuts a feller hears
Rattlin' down is more like tears
Drappin' on the leaves below—
I love Old October so!

Can't tell what it is about
Old October knocks me out!—
I sleep well enough at night—
And the blamedest appetite
Ever mortal man possessed,—
Last thing et, it tastes the best!—
Warnuts, butternuts, pawpaws,
'Iles and limbers up my jaws
Fer raal service, sich as new
Pork, spareribs, and sausage, too.—
Yit, fer all, they's somepin' 'bout
Old October knocks me out!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

51

Jim

HE was jes' a plain, ever'-day, all-round kind of a jour,
Consumpted-lookin'—but la!

The jokeiest, wittiest, story-tellin', song-singin', laughin'est,
jolliest

Feller you ever saw!

Worked at jes' coarse work, but you kin bet he was fine
enough in his talk,

And his feelin's too!

Lordy! ef he was on'y back on his bench ag'in to-day,
a-carryin' on

Like he ust to do!

Any shopmate'll tell you there never was, on top o' dirt,

A better feller'n Jim!

You want a favor, and couldn't git it anywheres else—

You could git it o' him!

Most free-heartedest man thataway in the world, I guess!

Give up ever' nickel he's worth—

And, ef you'd a-wanted it, and named it to him, and it was
his,

He'd 'a' give you the earth!

Allus a-reachin' out, Jim was, and a-he'ppin' some

Pore feller on to his feet—

He'd 'a' never 'a' keered how hungry he was hisse'f,

So's *the feller* got somepin' to eat!

Didn't make no differ'nce at all to him how *he* was dressed,

He ust to say to me,—

"You togg out a tramp purty comfortable in winter-time,

a-huntin' a job,

And he'll git along!" says he.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jim didn't have, ner never could git ahead, so overly much
O' this world's goods at a time.—

'Fore now I've saw him, more'n onc't, lend a dollar, and
haf to, more'n likely,

Turn round and borry a dime!
Mebby laugh and joke about it hisse'f fer a while—then
jerk his coat,

And kind o' square his chin,
Tie on his apern, and squat hisse'f on his old shoe-bench,
And go to peggin' ag'in!

Patientest feller, too, I reckon, 'at ever jes' natchurly
Coughed hisse'f to death!

Long enough after his voice was lost he'd laugh in a whis-
per and say

He could git ever'thing but his breath—
"You fellers," he'd sort o' twinkle his eyes and say,
"Is a-pilin' on to me

A mighty big debt fer that-air little weak-chested ghost o'
mine to pack
Through all Eternity!"

Now there was a man 'at jes' 'peared-like, to me,
'At ortn't 'a' never 'a' died!

"But death hain't a-showin' no favors," the old boss said—
"On'y to *Jim!*" and cried:

And Wigger, who puts up the best sewed-work in the
shop—

Er the whole blame neighborhood,—
He says, "When God made Jim, I bet you He didn't do
anything else that day
But jes' set around and feel good!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

52 *A New Year's Time at Willards's*

I

THE HIRED MAN TALKS

THERE'S old man Willards; an' his wife;
An' Marg'et—S'repty's sister;—an'
There's me—an' I'm the hired man;
An' Tomps McClure, you bet yer life!

Well, now, old Willards hain't so bad,
Considerin' the chance he's had.

Of course, he's rich, an' sleeps an' eats

Whenever he's a mind to: Takes
An' leans back in the Amen-seats

An' thanks the Lord fer all he makes.—

That's purty much all folks has got

Ag'inst the old man, like as not!

But there's his woman—jes' the turn

Of them-air two wild girls o' hern—

Marg'et an' S'repty—allus in

Fer any cuttin'-up concern—

Church festibals, and foolishin'

Round Christmas-trees, an' New Year's sprees—

Set up to watch the Old Year go

An' New Year come—sich things as these;

An' turkey-dinners, don't you know!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

S'repty's younger, an' more gay,
An' purtier, an' finer dressed
Than Marg'et is—but, lawsy-day!
She hain't the independentest!—
"Take care!" old Willards used to say,
"Take care!—Let Marg'et have her way,
An' S'repty, you go off an' play
On your melodeum!"—But, best
Of all, comes Toms! An' I'll be bound,
Ef he hain't the beatin'est
Young chap in all the country round!
Ef you knowed Toms you'd like him, shore!
They hain't no man on top o' ground
Walks into my affections more!—
An' all the Settlement'll say
That Toms was liked jes' thataway
By ever'body, till he tuk
A shine to S'repty Willards.—Then
You'd ort 'o see the old man buck
An' h'ist hisse'f, an' paw the dirt,
An' hint that "common workin'-men
That didn't want their feelin's hurt
'Ud better hunt fer 'comp'ny' where
The folks was pore an' didn't care!"—
The pine-blank facts is,—the old man,
Last Christmas was a year ago,
Found out some *presents* Toms had got
Fer S'repty, an' hit made him hot—
Set down an' tuk his pen in hand
An' writ to Toms an' told him so

THE HOOSIER BOOK

On legal cap, in white an' black,
An' give him jes' to understand
"No Christmas-gifts o' 'lily white'
An' bear's-ile could fix matters right,"
An' wropped 'em up an' sent 'em back!
Well, S'repty cried an' snuffled round
Consid'able. But Marg'et she
Toed out another sock, an' wound
Her knittin' up, an' drawed the tea,
An' then set on the supper-things,
An' went up in the loft an' dressed—
An' through it all you'd never guessed.
What she was up to! An' she brings
Her best hat with her an' her shawl,
An' gloves, an' redicule, an' all,
An' injirubbers, an' comes down
An' tells 'em she's a-goin' to town
To he'p the Christmas goin's-on
Her Church got up. An' go she does—
The best hosswoman ever was!
"An' what'll we do whlle you're gone?"
The old man says, a-tryin' to be
Agreeable. "Oh! *you?*" says she,—
"*You* kin jaw S'repty, like you did,
An' slander Toms!" An' off she rid!

Now, this is all *I'm* goin' to tell
Of this-here story—that is, I
Have done my very level best
As fur as this, an' here I "dwell,"
As auctioneers says, winkin' sly:
Hit's old man Willards tells the rest.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

II

THE OLD MAN TALKS

Adzackly jes' one year ago,
This New Year's day, Tomps comes to me—
In my own house, an' whilse the folks
Was gittin' dinner,—an' he pokes
His nose right in, an' says, says he:
"I got yer note—an' read it *slow!*
You don't like *me*, n'er I don't *you*,"
He says,—“we're even there, you know!
But you've said, funder, that no gal
Of yourn kin marry me, er shall,
An' I'd best shet off *comin'*, too!”
An' then he says,—“Well, them's *YOUR* views;—
But, havin' talked with S'repty, *we*
Have both agreed to disagree
With your peculiar notions—*some*;
An' *that's* the reason, I refuse
To quit a-comin' here, but come—
Not fer to threat, n'er raise no skeer
An' spile yer turkey-dinner here,—
But jes' fer S'repty's sake, to sheer
Yer New Year's. Shall I take a cheer?”

Well, blame-don! ef I ever see
Sich impidence! I couldn't say
Not nary word! But Mother she
Sot out a cheer fer Tomps, an' they
Shuk hands an' turnt their back on me.
Then I riz—mad as mad could be!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But Marg'et says,—“Now, Pap! you set
Right where you're settin'!—Don't you fret!
An', Toms—you warm yer feet!” says she,
“An' throw yer mitts an' comfert on
The bed there! Where is S'repty gone?—
The cabbage is a-scortchin'! Ma,
Stop cryin' there an' stir the slaw!”
Well!—what was *Mother cryin'* fer?—
I half riz up—but Marg'et's chin
Hit squared—an' I set down ag'in—
I allus *was* afeard o' her,
I was, by jucks! So there I set,
Betwixt a sinkin'-chill an' sweat,
An' scuffled with my wrath an' shet
My teeth to mighty tight, you bet!
An' yit, fer all that I could do,
I *eeched* to jes' git up an' whet
The carvin'-knife a rasp er two
On Toms's ribs—an' so would you!—
Fer he had riz an' faced around,
An' stood there, smilin', as they brung
The turkey in, all stuffed an' browned—
Too sweet fer nose er tooth er tongue!
With sniffs o' sage, an' p'r'aps a dash
Of old burnt brandy, steamin'-hot,
Mixed kind o' in with apple-mash.
An' mince-meat, an' the Lord knows what!
Nobody was a-talkin' then,
To 'filiate any awk'ardness—
No noise o' any kind but jes'
The rattle o' the dishes when
They'd fetch 'em in an' set 'em down,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' fix an' change 'em round an' round,
Like women does—till Mother says,—
"Vittels is ready; Abner, call
Down S'repty—she's up-stairs, I guess."—
And Marg'et *she* says, "Ef you bawl
Like that, she'll not come down at all!
Besides, we needn't wait tili *she*
Gits down! Here, Toms, set down by me,
An' Pap: say grace!" . . . Well, there I was!—
What *could* I do! I drapped my head
Behind my fists an' groaned, an' said:—
"Indulgent Parent! in Thy cause
We bow the head an' bend the knee,
An' break the bread, an' pour the wine,
Feelin'"—(The stair-door suddently
Went bang! an' S'repty flounced by me)—
"Feelin'," I says, "this feast is Thine—
This New Year's feast"—an' *rap-rap-rap!*
Went Marg'et's case-knife on her plate—
An' next, I heerd a sasser drap,—
Then I looked up, an', strange to state,
There S'repty set in Toms's lap—
An' huggin' him, as shore as fate!
An' Mother kissin' him k-slap!—
An' Marg'et—she chips in to drap
The ruther peert remark to me:—
"That 'grace' o' yourn," she says, "won't 'gee'—
This hain't no '*New Year's* feast,'" says she,—
"*This is a' INFAIR-Dinner, Pap!*"

An' so it was!—be'n married fer
Purt' nigh a week!—'Twas Marg'et planned

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The whole thing fer 'em, through an' through.
I'm rickonciled; an', understand,
I take things jes' as they occur,—
Ef *Marg'et* liked Toms, Toms 'ud do!—
But I-says-I, a-holt his hand,—
"I'm glad you didn't marry *HER*—
'Cause *Marg'et's* my *guardeen*—yes-sir!—
An' S'repty's good enough fer you!"

53

Regardin' Terry Hut

SENCE I tuk holt o' Gibbses' Churn
And be'n a-handlin' the concern,
I've traveled round the grand old State
Of Indiany, lots, o' late!—
I've canvassed Crawferdsville and sweat
Around the town o' Layfayette;
I've saw a many a County-seat
I *ust* to think was hard to beat:
At constant dreelage and expense
I've worked Greencastle and Vincennes—
Dropped out o' Putnam into Clay,
Owen, and on down thataway
Plum into Knox, on the back-track
Fer home ag'in—and glad I'm back!—
I've saw these towns, as I say—but
They's none 'at beats old Terry Hut!

It's more'n likely you'll insist
I claim this 'cause I'm prejudist,

THE HOOSIER LOOK

Bein' born'd here in ole Vygo
In sight o' Terry Hut;—but no,
Yer clean dead wrong!—and I maintain
They's nary drap in ary vein.
O' mine but what's as free as air
To jes' take issue with you there!—
'Cause, boy and man, fer forty year,
I've argied *ag'in*st livin' here,
And jawed around and traded lies
About our lack o' enterprise,
And tuk and turned in and agreed
All other towns was in the lead,
When—drat my melts!—they couldn't cut
No shine a-tall with Terry Hut!

Take, even, statesmanship, and wit,
And ginerel git-up-and-git,
Old Terry Hut is sound clean through!—
Turn old Dick Thompson loose, er Dan
Vorehees—and where's they any man
Kin even hold a candle to
Their eloquence?—And where's as clean
A fi-nan-seer as Rile' McKeen—
Er puorer, in his daily walk,
In railroad er in racin' stock!
And there's 'Gene Debs—a man 'at stands
And jes' holds out in his two hands
As warm a heart as ever beat
Betwixt here and the Judgment Seat!—
All these is reasons why I putt
Sich bulk o' faith in Terry Hut.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So I've come back, with eyes 'at sees
My faults, at last,—to make my peace
With this old place, and truthful' swear—
Like Ginerel Tom Nelson does,—
“They hain't no city anywhere
On God's green earth lays over us!”
Our city government is *grand*—
“Ner is they better farmin'-land
Sun-kissed”—as Tom goes on and says—
“Er dower'd with sich advantages!”
And I've come back, with welcome tread,
From journeyin's vain, as I have said,
To settle down in ca'm content,
And cuss the towns where I have went,
And brag on ourn, and boast and strut
Around the streets o' Terry Hut!

54 *Down on Wriggle Crick*

“Best time to kill a hog's when he's fat.”—OLD SAW.

MOSTLY, folks is law-abidin'
Down on Wriggle Crick,—
Seein' they's no Squire residin'
In our bailywick;
No grand juries, no suppeenies,
Ner no vested rights to pick
Out yer man, jerk up and jail ef
He's outragin' Wriggle Crick!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wriggle Crick hain't got no lawin',
Ner no suits to beat;
Ner no court-house gee-and-hawin'
Like a County-seat;
Hain't no waitin' round fer verdicks,
Ner non-gittin' witness-fees;
Ner no thieves 'at gits "new hearin's,"
By some lawyer slick as grease!

Wriggle Crick's leadin' spirit
Is old John's Culwell,—
Keeps post-office, and right near it
Owns what's called "The Grand Hotel"—
(Warehouse now)—buys wheat and ships it;
Gits out ties, and trades in stock,
And knows all the high-toned drummers
'Twixt South Bend and Mishawauk.

Last year comes along a feller—
Sharper 'an a lance—
Stovepipe-hat and silk umbreller,
And a boughten all-wool pants,—
Tinkerin' of clocks and watches;
Says a trial's all he wants—
And rents out the tavern-office
Next to Uncle John's.

Well.—He tacked up his k'dentials,
And got down to biz.—
Captured John's by cuttin' stenchils
Fer them old wheat-sacks o' his.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fixed his clock, in the post-office—
Painted fer him, clean and slick,
'Croست his safe, in gold-leaf letters,
"J. Culwell's, Wriggle Crick."

Any kind o' job you keered to
Resk him with, and bring,
He'd fix fer you—jes' appeared to
Turn his hand to anything!—
Rings, er earbobs, er umbrellers—
Glue a cheer er chany doll,—
W'y, of all the beatin' fellers,
He jes' beat 'em all!

Made his friends, but wouldn't stop there,—
One mistake he learnt,
That was, sleepin' in his shop there.—
And one Sund'y night it burnt!
Come in one o' jes' a-sweepin'
All the whole town high and dry—
And that feller, when they waked him,
Suffocatin', mighty nigh!

Johnts he drug him from the buildin',
He'pless—'peared to be,—
And the women and the childern
Drenchin' him with sympathy!
But I noticed Johnts helt on him
With a' extry lovin' grip,
And the men-folks gathered round him
In most warmest pardnership!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That's the whole mess, grease-and-dopin'!
Jolnts's safe was saved—
But the lock was found sprung open,
And the inside caved.
Was no trial—ner no jury—
Ner no jedge ner court-house-click.—
Circumstances alters cases
Down on Wriggle Crick!

55 *The Little Town o' Tailholt*

YOU kin boast about yer cities, and their stiddy growth
and size,
And brag about yer County-seats, and business enterprise,
And railroads, and factories, and all sich foolery—
But the little Town o' Tailholt is big enough fer me!

You kin harp about yer churches, with their steeples in the
clouds,
And gas about yer graded streets, and blow about yer
crowds;
You kin talk about yer "*theaters*," and all you've got to
see—
But the little Town o' Tailholt is *show* enough fer me!

They hain't no *style* in our town—hit's little-like and
small—
They hain't no "*churches*," nuther,—jes' the meetin'-house
is all;
They's no sidewalks, to speak of—but the highway's allus
free,
And the little Town o' Tailholt is wide enough fer me!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some find it discommodin'-like, I'm willing to admit,
To hev but one post-office, and a womern keepin' hit,
And the drug-store, and shoe-shop, and grocery, all three—
But the little Town o' Tailholt is handy 'nough fer me!

You kin smile and turn yer nose up, and joke and hev yer
fun,
And laugh and holler "Tail-holts is better holts'n none!"
Ef the city suits you better, w'y, hit's where you'd ort'o
be—
But the little Town o' Tailholt's good enough fer me!

56 *Little Orphant Annie*

LITTLE Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay,
An' wash the cups an' saucers up, an' brush the
crumbs away,
An' shoo the chickens off the porch, an' dust the hearth, an'
sweep,
An' make the fire, an' bake the bread, an' earn her board-
an'-keep;
An' all us other childern, when the supper things is done,
We set around the kitchen fire an' has the mostest fun
A-list'nin' to the witch-tales 'at Annie tells about,
An' the Gobble-uns 'at gits you
Ef you
Don't
Watch
Out!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wunst they wuz a little boy wouldn't say his prayers,—
An' when he went to bed at night, away up-stairs,
His Mammy heerd him holler, an' his Daddy heerd him
 bawl,
An' when they turn't the kivvers down, he wuzn't there at
 all!
An' they seeked him in the rafter-room, an' cubby-hole, an'
 press,
An' seeked him up the chimby-flue, an' ever'wheres, I
 guess;
But all they ever found wuz thist his pants an' round-
 about:—

An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

 Ef you

 Don't

 Watch

 Out!

An' one time a little girl 'ud allus laugh and grin,
An' make fun of ever'one, an' all her blood-an'-kin;
An' wunst, when they was "company," an' ole folks wuz
 there,
She mocked 'em an' shocked 'em, an' said she didn't care!
An' thist as she kicked her heels, an' turn't to run an' hide,
They wuz two great big Black Things a-standin' by her
 side,
An' they snatched her through the ceilin' 'fore she knowed
 what she's about!

An' the Gobble-uns 'll git you

 Ef you

 Don't

 Watch

 Out!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' little Orphant Annie says, when the blaze is blue,
An' the lamp-wick sputters; an' the wind goes *woo-oo!*
An' you hear the crickets quit, an' the moon is gray,
An' the lightnin'-bugs in dew is all squenched away,—
You better mind yer parunts, an' yer teachurs fond an' dear,
An' churish them 'at loves you, an' dry the orphant's tear,
An' he'p the pore an' needy ones 'at clusters all about,
Er the Gobble-uns 'll git you

Ef you

Don't

Watch

Out!

PIPES O' PAN AT ZEKESBURY

57 *Down Around the River*

NOON-TIME and June-time, down around the river !
Have to furse with Lizey Ann—but lawzy ! I fergive
her !

Drives me off the place, and says 'at all 'at she's a-wishin',
Land o' gracious ! time'll come I'll git enough o' fishin' !
Little Dave, a-choppin' wood, never 'pears to notice ;
Don't know where she's hid his hat, er keerin' where his
coat is,—

Specalatin', more'n like, he hain't a-goin' to mind me,
And guessin' where, say twelve o'clock, a feller'd likely
find me.

Noon-time and June-time, down around the river !
Clean out o' sight o' home, and skulkin' under kivver
Of the sycamores, jack-oaks, and swamp-ash and ellum—
Idies all so jumbled up you kin hardly tell 'em !—
Tired, you know, but *lovin'* it, and smilin' jes' to think 'at
Any sweeter tiredness you'd fairly want to *drink* it.
Tired o' fishin'—tired o' fun—line out slack and slacker—
All you want in all the world's a little more tobacker !

Hungry, but *a-hidin'* it, er jes' a-not a-keerin':—
Kingfisher gittin' up and skootin' out o' hearin' ;
Snipes on the t'other side, where the County Ditch is,
Wadin' up and down the aide like they'd rolled their
britches !

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Old turkle on the root kind o' sort o' drappin'
Intoo th' worter like he don't know how it happen!
Worter, shade and all so mixed, don't know which you'd
orter
Say, th' worter in the shadder—*shadder* in the worter.

Somebody hollerin'—'way around the bend in
Upper Fork—where yer eye kin jes' ketch the endin'
Of the shiney wedge o' wake some muss-rat's a-makin'
With that pesky nose o' his! Then a sniff o' bacon,
Corn-bread and 'dock-greens—and little Dave a-shinnin'
'Croست the rocks and mussel-shells, a-limpin' and a-grinnin',
With yer dinner fer ye, and a blessin' from the giver.
Noon-time and June-time down around the river!

58

Romancin'

I' B'EN a-kind o' "*musin'*," as the feller says, and I'm
About o' the conclusion that they hain't no better time,
When you come to cipher on it, than the times we used to
know
When we swore our first "dog-gone-it" sort o' solem'-like
and low!

You git my idy, do you?—*Little* tads, you understand—
Jest a-wishin' thue and thue you that you on'y wuz a *man*.—
Yit here I am, this minute, even sixty, to a day,
And fergittin' all that's in it, wishin' jes' the other way!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I hain't no hand to lectur' on the times, er *demonstrate* .
Whare the trouble is, er hector and domineer with Fate,—
But when I git so flurried, and so pestered-like and blue,
And so rail owdacious worried, let me tell you what I do!—

I jest gee-haw the hosses, and unhook the swingle-tree,
Whare the hazel-bushes tosses down theyr shadders over me,
And I draw my plug o' navy, and climb the fence, and set
Jest a-thinkin' here, i gravy; tel my eyes is wringin' wet!

Tho' I still kin see the trouble o' the *presunt*, I kin see—
Kindo' like my sight wuz double—all the things that *ust*
to be;

And the flutter o' the robin, and the teeter o' the wren
Sets the willer-branches bobbin' "howdy-do" thum *Now* to
Then!

The deadnin' and the thicket's jest a-bilin' full of June,
Thum the rattle o' the cricket, to the yallar-hammer's tune;
And the catbird in the bottom, and the sap-suck on the
snag,
Seems ef they can't—od-rot 'em!—jest do nothin' else but
brag!

They's music in the twitter of the bluebird and the jay,
And that sassy little critter jest a-*peckin'* all the day;
They's music in the "flicker," and they's music in the
thrush,
And they's music in the snicker o' the chipmunk in the
brush!

They's music *all around* me!— And I go back, in a dream
Sweeter yit than ever found me fast asleep,—and in the
stream

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That ust to split the medder whare the dandylions growed,
I stand knee-deep, and redder than the sunset down the
road.

Then's when I' b'en a-fishin'!—and they's other fellers, too,
With theyr hickry poles a-swishin' out behind 'em; and a
few

Little "shiners" on our stringers, with theyr tails tiptoein'
bloom,

As we dance 'em in our fingers all the happy journey home.

I kin see us, true to Natur', thum the time we started out
With a biscuit and a 'tater in our little "roundabout"!
I kin see our lines a-tanglin', and our elbows in a jam,
And our naked legs a-danglin' thum the apern o' the dam.

I kin see the honeysuckle climbin' up around the mill;
And kin hear the worter chuckle, and the wheel a-growlin'
still;

And thum the bank below it I kin steal the old canoe,
And jest git in and row it like the miller ust to do.

W'y, I git my fancy focused on the past so mortal plain
I kin even smell the locus'-blossoms bloomin' in the lane;
And I hear the cow-bells clinkin' sweeter tunes'n "Money-
musk"

Fer the lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin' and a-dancin' in the dusk.

And when I've kep' on "musin'," as the feller says, tel I'm
Firm-fixed in the conclusion that they hain't no better time,
When you come to cipher on it, than the *old* times,—I
de-clare,

I kin wake and say "dog-gone-it!" jest as soft as any
prayer!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

59 *Somep'n Common-Like*

SOME P'N 'at's common-like, and good
And plain, and easy understood;
Somep'n 'at folks like me and you
Kin understand, and relish, too,
And find some sermint in 'at hits
The spot, and sticks and benefits.
We don't need nothin' extry fine;
'Cause, take the run o' minds like mine,
And we'll go more on good horse-sense
Than all your flowery eloquence;
And we'll jedge best of honest acts
By Nature's statement of the facts
So when you're wantin' to express
Your misery, er happiness,
Er anything 'at's wuth the time
O' telling in plain talk er rhyme—
Jes' sort o' let your subject run
As ef the Lord wuz listenun.

60 *The Little Tiny Kickshaw*

"—And any little tiny kickshaw."—SHAKESPEARE.

THE little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me,
'Tis sweeter than the sugar-plum that reepens on the
tree,
Wi' denty flavorin's o' spice an' musky rosemarie,
The little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Tis luscious wi' the stalen tang o' fruits frae ower the sea,
An' e'en its fragrance gars we laugh wi' langin' lip an' ee,
Till a' its frazen scheen o' white maun melten hinnie be—
Sae weel I luve the kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

O I luve the tiny kickshaw, an' I smack my lips wi' glee
Aye mickle do I luve the taste o' sic a luxourie,
But maist I luve the luvein' han's that could the giftie gie
O' the little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me.

61

The Stepmother

FIRST she come to our house,
Tommy run and hid;
And Emily and Bob and me
We cried jus' like we did
When Mother died,—and we all sa'd
'At we all wisht 'at we was dead!

And Nurse she couldn't stop us,
And Pa he tried and tried,—
We sobbed and shook and wouldn't look,
But only cried and cried;
And nen some one—we couldn't jus'
Tell who—was cryin' same as us!

Our Stepmother! Yes, it was her,
Her arms around us all—
'Cause Tom slid down the bannister
And peeked in from the hall.—
And we all love her, too, because
She's purt' nigh good as Mother was!

62 *Want to Be Whur Mother Is*

"**W**ANT to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"

Jeemses Rivers! won't some one ever shet that howl o' his?
That-air yellin' drives me wild!
Cain't none of ye stop the child?
Want yer Daddy? "Naw." Gee whizz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Coax him, Sairy! Mary, sing somepin' fer him! Lift him,
Liz—

Bang the clock-bell with the key—
Er the *meat-ax*! Gee-mun-nee!
Listen to them lungs o' his!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Preacher guess'll pound all night on that old pulpit o' his;
'Pears to me some wimmin jest
Shows religious interest
Mostly 'fore their fambly's riz!
"Want to be whur mother is!"

"Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!"
Nights like these and whipperwills allus brings that voice
of his!
Sairy; Mary; 'Lizabeth;
Don't set there and ketch yer death
In the dew—er rheumatiz—
Want to be whur mother is?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

63

Marthy Ellen

THEY'S nothin' in the name to strike
A feller more'n common like!
'Taint liable to git no praise
Ner nothin' like it nowadays;
An' yit that name o' her'n is jest
As purty as the purtiest—
And more'n that, I'm here to say
I'll live a-thinkin' thataway
And die fer Marthy Ellen!

It may be I was prejudust
In favor of it from the fust—
'Cause I kin ricollect jest how
We met, and hear her mother now
A-callin' of her down the road—
And; aggervatin' little toad!—
I see her now, jest sort o' half-
Way disapp'inted, turn and laugh
And mock her—"Marthy Ellen!"

Our people never had no fuss,
And yit they never tuck to us;
We neigbered back and foreds some;
Until they see she liked to come
To our house—and me and her
Was jest together ever'whur
And all the time—and when they'd see
That I liked her and she liked me,
They'd holler "Marthy Ellen!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

When we growed up, and they shet down
On me and her a-runnin' roun'
Together, and her father said
He'd neyer leave her nary red,
So he'p him, ef she married me,
And so on—and her mother she
Jest agged the gyrl, and said she 'lowed
She'd ruther see her in her shroud,
I *writ* to Marthy Ellen—

That is, I kind o' tuck my pen
In hand, and stated whur and when
The undersigned would be that night,
With two good hosses, saddled right
Fer lively travelin', in case
Her folks 'ud like to jine the race.
She sent the same note back, and writ
"The rose is red I" right under it—
"Your'n allus, Marthy Ellen."

That's all, I reckon—Nothin' more
To tell but what you've heerd afore—
The same old story, sweeter though
Fer all the trouble, don't you know.
Old-fashioned name! and yit it's jest
As purty as the purtiest;
And more'n that, I'm here to say
I'll live a-thinkin' that away,
And die fer Marthy Ellen!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

64

Who Santy Claus Wuz

JES' a little bit o' feller—I remember still,—
Ust to almost *cry* fer Christmas, like a youngster will:
Fourth o' July's nothin' to it!—New-Year's ain't a smell:
Easter-Sunday—Circus-Day—jes' all dead in the shell!
Lordy, though! at night, you know, to set around and hear
The old folks work the story off about the sledge and deer,
And "Santy" skootin' round the roof, all wrapped in fur
and fuzz—

Long afore

I knowed who

"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Ust to wait, and set up late, a week or two ahead:
Couldn't hardly keep awake, ner wouldn't go to bed:
Kittle stewin' on the fire, and Mother settin' here
Darnin' socks, and rockin' in the skreeky rockin'-cheer;
Pap gap', and wunder where it wuz the money went,
And quar'l with his frosted heels, and spill his liniment:
And me a-dreamin' sleigh-bells when the clock 'ud whir
and buzz,

Long afore

I knowed who

"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Size the fireplace up, and figger how "Old Santy" could
Manage to come down the chimbly, like they said he would:
Wisht that I could hide and see him—wundered what he'd
say

Ef he ketched a feller layin' fer him thataway!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But I *bet* on him, and *liked* him, same as ef he had
Turned to pat me on the back and say, "Look here, my lad,
Here's my pack,—jes' he'p yourse'f, like all good boys
does!"

Long afore

I knowed who

"Santy-Claus" wuz!

Wisht that yarn was *true* about him, as it 'peared to be—
Truth made out o' lies like that-un's good enough fer me!—
Wisht I still wuz so confidin' I could jes' go wild
Over hangin' up my stockin's, like the little child
Climbin' in my lap to-night, and beggin' me to tell
'Bout them reindeers, and "Old Santy" that she loves so
well

I'm half sorry fer this little-girl-sweetheart of his—
Long afore

She knows who

"Santy-Claus" is!

65

This Man Jones

THIS man Jones was what you'd call
A feller 'at had no sand at all;
Kind o' consumpted, and undersize,
And sallor-complected, with big sad eyes,
And a kind-of-a sort-of-a hang-dog style,
And a sneakin' sort-of-a half-way smile
'At kind o' give him away to us
As a preacher, maybe, er somepin' wuss.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Didn't take with the gang—well, no—
But still we managed to use him, though,—
Coddin' the gilly along the rout',
And drivin' the stakes 'at he pulled out—
Fer I was one of the bosses then,
And of course stood in with the canvasmen;
And the way we put up jobs, you know,
On this man Jones jes' beat the show!

Ust to rattle him scandalous,
And keep the feller a-dodgin' us,
And a-shyin' round half skeered to death,
And afeerd to whimper above his breath;
Give him a cussin', and then a kick,
And then a kind-of-a back-hand lick—
Jes' fer the fun of seein' him climb
Around with a head on most the time.

But what was the curioust thing to me,
Was along o' the party—let me see,—
Who was our "Lion Queen" last year?—
Mamzelle Zanty, or De La Pierre?—
Well, no matter—a stunnin' mash,
With a red-ripe lip, and a long eyelash,
And a figger sich as the angels owns—
And one too many fer this man Jones.

He'd allus wake in the afternoon,
As the band waltzed in on the lion-tune,
And there, from the time 'at she'd go in
Till she'd back out of the cage ag'in;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He'd stand, shaky and limber-kneed—
'Specially when she come to "feed"
The beasts raw meat with her naked hand"—
And all that business, you understand.

And it *was* resky in that den—
Fer I think she juggled three cubs then,
And a big "green" lion 'at used to smash
Collar-bones fer old Frank Nash;
And I reckon now she hain't fergot
The afternoon old "Nero" sot
His paws on *her!*—but as fer me,
It's a sort-of-a mixed-up mystery:—

Kind o' remember an awful roar,
And see her back fer the bolted door—
See the cage rock—heerd her call
"God have mercy!" and that was all—
Fer they ain't no livin' man can tell
What it's like when a thousand yell
In female tones, and a thousand more
Howl in bass till their throats is sore!

But the keeper said 'at dragged her out,
They heerd some feller laugh and shout—
"Save her! Quick! I've got the cuss!"
And yit she waked and smiled on *us!*
And we daren't flinch, fer the doctor said,
Seein' as this man Jones was dead,
Better to jes' not let her know
Nothin' o' that fer a week er so.

66 *When the Green Gits Back in
the Trees*

IN spring, when the green gits back in the trees,
 And the sun comes out and *stays*,
 And yer boots pulls on with a good tight squeeze,
 And you think of yer barefoot days;
 When you *ort* to work and you want to *not*,
 And you and yer wife agrees
 It's time to spade up the garden-lot,
 When the green gits back in the trees—
 Well! work is the least o' *my* ideas
 When the green, you know, gits back in the trees!

When the green gits back in the trees, and bees
 Is a-buzzin' aroun' ag'in,
 In that kind of a lazy go-as-you-please
 Old gait they bum roun' in;
 When the groun's all bald where the hay-rick stood,
 And the crick's riz, and the breeze
 Coaxes the bloom in the old dogwood,
 And the green gits back in the trees,—
 I like, as I say, in sich scenes as these,
 The time when the green gits back in the trees!

When the whole tail-feathers o' Winter-time
 Is 'all pulled out and gone!
 And the sap it thaws and begins to climb,
 And the swet it starts out on

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A feller's forred, a-gittin' down
At the old spring on his knees—
I kindo' like jest a-loaferin' roun'
When the green gits back in the trees—
Jest a-potterin' roun' as I—durn—please—
When the green, you know, gits back in the trees !

67

Doc Sifers.

OF all the doctors I could cite you to in this-'ere town
Doc Sifers is my favorite, jes' take him up and down !
Count in the Bethel Neighborhood, and Rollins, and Big
Bear,
And Sifers' standin's jes' as good as ary doctor's there !

There's old Doc Wick, and Glenn, and Hall, and Wurgler,
and McVeigh,

But I'll buck Sifers 'g'inst 'em all and down 'em any day !
Most old Wick ever knowed, I s'pose, was *whisky* ! Wurg-
ler—well,

He et morphine—ef actions shows, and facts' reliable !

But Sifers—though he ain't no sot, he's got his faults ;
and yit

When you *git* Sifers onc't, you've got a *doctor*, don't
fergit !

He ain't mutch at his office, er his house, er anywhere
You'd natchurly think certain fer to ketch the feller there.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But don't blame Doc: he's got all sorts o' curious notions—as

The feller says, his odd-come-shorts, like smart men mostly has.

He'll more'n like be potter'n' 'round the Blacksmith Shop; er in

Some back lot, spadin' up the ground, er gradin' it ag'in.

Er at the work bench, planin' things; er buildin' little traps To ketch birds; galvenizin' rings; er graftin' plums, perhaps.

Make anything! good as the best!—a gun-stock—er a flute; He whittled out a set o' chesstmen onc't o' laurel root;

Durin' the Army—got his trade o' surgeon there—I own To-day a finger-ring Doc made out of a Sesesh bone! An' glued a fiddle onc't fer me—jes' all so busted you 'D 'a' throwed the thing away, but he fixed her as good as new!

And take Doc, now, in *ager*, say, er *biles*, er *rheumatiz*, And all afflictions thataway, and he's the best they is! Er janders—milksick—I don't keer—k-yore anything he tries—

A abscess; getherin' in yer yeer; er granilated eyes!

There was the Widder Daubenspeck they all give up fer dead;

A blame cowbuncle on her neck, and clean out of her head!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

First had this doctor, what's-his-name, from "Puddles-
burg," and then
This little red-head, "Burnin' Shame" they call him—Dr.
Glenn.

And they "consulted" on the case, and claimed she'd haf
to die,—
I jes' was joggin' by the place, and heerd her dorter cry,
And stops and calls her to the fence; and I-says-I, "Let me
Send Sifers—bet you fifteen cents he'll k-yore her!"
"Well," says she,

"Light out!" she says: And, lipp-tee-cut I loped in town,
and rid
'Bout two hours more to find him, but I kussed him when
I did!
He was down at the Gunsmith Shop a-stuffin' birds! Says
he,
"My sulky's broke." Says I, "You hop right on and ride
with me!"

I got him there.—"Well, Aunty, ten days k-yores you,"
Sifers said,
"But what's yer idy livin' when yer jes' as good as dead?"
And there's Dave Banks—jes' back from war without a
scratch—one day
Got ketched up in a sickle-bar, a reaper runaway.—

His shoulders, arms, and hands and legs jes' sawed in
strips! And Jake
Dunn starts fer Sifers—feller begs to shoot him fer God-
sake.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc, 'course, was gone, but he had penned the notice, "At
Big Bear—

Be back to-morry; Gone to 'tend the Bee Convention
there."

But Jake, he tracked him—rid and rode the whole en-
durin' night!

And 'bout the time the roosters crowed they both hove
into sight.

Doc had to amputate, but 'greed to save Dave's arms, and
swore

He could 'a' saved his legs ef he'd b'en there the day before.

Like when his wife's own mother died 'fore Sifers could
be found,

And all the neighbors fer and wide a' all jes' chasin' round;
Tel finally—I had to laugh—it's jes' like Doc, you know,—
Was learnin' fer to telegraph, down at the old deepo.

But all they're faultin' Sifers fer, there's none of 'em kin
say

He's biggoty, er keerless, er not posted anyway;
He ain't built on the common plan of doctors now-a-days,
He's jes' a great, big, brainy man—that's where the trouble
lays!

68 *Whatever the Weather May Be*

"**W**HATEVER the weather may be," says he—
"Whatever the weather may be,
It's plaze, if ye will, an' I'll say me say,—
Supposin' to-day was the winterest day,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wud the weather be changing because ye cried,
Or the snow be grass were ye crucified?

The best is to make yer own summer," says he,

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—

"Whatever the weather may be!

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—

"Whatever the weather may be,

It's the songs ye sing, an' the smiles ye wear,

That's a-makin' the sun shine everywhere;

An' the world of gloom is a world of glee,

Wid the bird in the bush, an' the bud in the tree,

An' the fruit on the stim o' the bough," says he,

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—

"Whatever the weather may be!

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—

"Whatever the weather may be,

Ye can bring the Spring, wid its green an' gold,

An' the grass in the grove where the snow lies cold;

An' ye'll warm yer back, wid a smiling face,

As ye sit at yer heart, like an owld fireplace,

An' toast the toes o' yer sowl," says he,

"Whatever the weather may be," says he—

"Whatever the weather may be!"

LAS' July—and, I presume
 'Bout as hot
 As the ole Gran'-jury room
 Whare they sot!—
 Fight 'twixt Mike an' Doc McGreff . . .
 'Pears to me jes' like as ef
 I'd a-dremp' the whole blame thing—
 Allus ha'nts me roun' the gizzard
 When they's nightmares on the wing,
 And a feller's blood's jes' friz!
 Seed the row from A to Izzard—
 'Cause I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em
 As me and you is!

Tell you the way it wuz—
 And I don't *want* to see,
 Like *some* fellers does,
 When they's goern to be
 Any kind o' fuss—
 On'y makes a rumpus wuss
 Fer to *interfere*
 When they's dander's riz—
 Might as lif to *cheer*!
 But I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em
 As me and you is!

I wuz kind o' strayin'
 Past the blame saloon—
 Heerd some fiddler playin'
 That ole "*hee-cup* tune!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'd *stopped*-like, you know,
Fer a minit er so,
And wuz jes' about
Settin' down, when—*Jeemses whizz!*
Whole durn winder-sash fell out!
And there laid Doc McGreff, and Mike
A-straddlin' him, all bloody-like,
And both a-gittin' down to biz!—
And I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em
As me and you is!

I wuz the on'y man aroun'—
(Durn old-fogey town!
'Peared more like, to me,
Sund'y than *Saturd'y!*)
Dog come 'crost the road
And tuk a smell
And putt right back;
Mishler driv by 'ith a load
O' cantalo'pes he couldn't sell—
Too mad, 'i jack!
To even ast
What wuz up, as he went past!
Weather most outrageous hot!—
Fairly hear it sizz
Roun' Dock and Mike—till Dock he shot—
And Mike he slacked that grip o' his
And fell, all spraddled out. Dock riz
'Bout half up, a-spittin' red,
And shuck his head—
And I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em
As me and you is!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Dock he says,
A-whisperin'-like,—
"It hain't no use
A-tryin' l—Mike
He's jes' ripped my daylights loose!—
Git that blame-don fiddler to
Let up, and come out here—You
Got some burryin' to do,—
Mike makes *one*, and, I expects,
'Bout ten seconds I'll make *two*!"
And he drapped back, whare he riz,
'Crost Mike's body, black and blue,
Like a great big letter X!—
And I wuz a-standin' as clos't to 'em
As me and you is!

70

Tom Johnson's Quit

A PASSEL o' the boys last night—
An' me amongst 'em—kind o' got
To talkin' Temper'nce left an' right,
An' workin' up "blue-ribbon," *hot*;
An' while we was a-countin' jes'
How many hed gone into hit
An' signed the pledge, some feller says,—
"Tom Johnson's quit!"

We laughed, of course—'cause Tom, you know,
Has spiled more whisky, boy an' man,
And seed more trouble, high an' low,
Than any chap but Tom could stand:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And so, says I, "*He's too nigh dead*
Fer Temper'nce to benefit!"
The feller sighed ag'in, and said—
"Tom Johnson's quit!"

We all *liked* Tom, an' that was why
We sort o' simmered down ag'in,
And ast the feller seriously
Ef he wa'n't tryin' to draw us in:
He shuck his head—tuck off his hat—
Helt up his hand an' opened hit,
An' says, says he, "I'll *swear* to that—
Tom Johnson's quit!"

Well, we was stumpt, an' tickled too,—
Because we knowed ef Tom *hed* signed
There wa'n't no man 'at wore the "blue"
'At was more honest'er inclined:
An' then and there we kind o' riz,—
The hull dern gang of us 'at bit—
An' th'owed our hats and let 'er whizz,—
"*Tom Johnson's quit!*"

I've heerd 'em holler when the balls
Was buzzin' 'round us wus'n bees,
An' when the ole flag on the walls
Was flappin' o'er the enemy's,
I've heerd a-many a wild "hooray"
'At made my heart git up an' git—
But Lord!—to hear 'em shout that way!—
"*Tom Johnson's quit!*"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But when we saw the chap 'at fetched
The news wa'n't jinin' in the cheer,
But stood there solemn-like, an' reched
An' kind o' wiped away a tear,
We spmeway sort o' stilled ag'in,
And listened—I kin hear him yit,
His voice a-wobblin' with his chin,—
“Tom Johnson's quit—

“I hain't a-givin' you no game—
I wisht I was! . . . An hour ago,
This operator—what's his name—
The one 'at works at night, you know?—
Went out to flag that Ten Express,
And sees a man in front of hit
Th'ow up his hands an' stagger—yes,—
Tom Johnson's quit.”

71 *The Old Home by the Mill*

THIS is “The old Home by the Mill”—fer we still call
it so,
Although the *old mill*, roof and sill, is all gone long ago.
The old home, though, and old folks—and the old spring,
and a few
Old cattails, weeds and hartychokes, is left to welcome
you!
Here, Marg'et, fetch the man a tin to drink out of! Our
spring
Keeps kindo'-sorto' cavin' in, but don't “*taste*” anything!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

She's kindo' *agin'*, Marg'et is—"the *old* process," like me,
All ham-stringed up with rhumatiz, and on in seventy-
three.

Jes' me and Marg'et lives alone here—like in long ago;
The childern all putt off and gone, and married, don't you
know?

One's millin' way out West somewhere; two other miller-
boys

In Minnyopolis they air; and one's in Illinoise.

The *oldest* gyrl—the first that went—married and died
right here;

The next lives in Winn's Settlement—for purt' nigh thirty
year!

And youngest one—was allus fer the old home here—but
no!—

Her man turns in and packs *her* 'way off to Idyho!

I don't miss them like *Marg'et* does—'cause I got *her*, you
see;

And when she pines for them—that's 'cause *she's* only *jes'*
got me!

I laugh, and joke her 'bout it all.—But talkin' sense, I'll *say*,
When she was tuk so bad last Fall, I laughed then t'other
way!

I hain't so favor'ble impressed 'bout *dyin'*; but ef I
Found I was only second-best when *us two* come to die,
I'd 'dopt the "new process," in full, ef *Marg'et* died, you
see,—

I'd jes' crawl in my grave and pull the green grass over
me!

POEMS OF CHILDHOOD

72

Uncle Sidney

SOMETIMES, when I bin bad,
An' Pa "currecks" me nen,
An' Uncle Sidney he comes here,
I'm allus good again;

'Cause Uncle Sidney says,
An' takes me up an' smiles,—
*The goodest mens they is ain't good
As baddest little childs!*

73

Waitin' Fer the Cat to Die

LAWZY! don't I rickollect
That-air old swing in the lane!
Right and proper, I expect,
Old times *can't* come back again;
But I want to state, ef they
Could come back, and I could say
What *my* pick 'ud be, i jing!
I'd say, Gimme the old swing
'Nunder the old locus'-trees
On the old place, ef you please!—
Danglin' there with half-shet eye,
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'd say, Gimme the old gang
O' barefooted, hungry, lean,
Ornry boys you want to hang
When you're growed up twic't as mean!
The old gyarden-patch, the old
Truants, and the stuff we stol'd!
The old stompin'-groun', where we
Wore the grass off, wild and free
As the swoop o' the old swing,
Where we ust to climb and cling,
And twist roun', and fight, and lie—
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

'Pears like I 'most allus could
Swing the highest of the crowd—
Jes' sail up there tel I stood
Downside-up, and screech out loud,—
Ketch my breath, and jes' drap back
Fer to let the old swing slack,
Yit my towhead dippin' still
In the green boughs, and the chill
Up my backbone taperin' down,
With my shadder on the groun'
Slow and slower trailin' by—
Waitin' fer the cat to die!

Now my daughter's little Jane's
Got a kind o' baby-swing
On the porch, so's when it rains
She kin play there—little thing!
And I'd limped out t'other day
With my old cheer thisaway,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Swingin' *her* and rockin' too,
Thinkin' how *I* ust to do
At *her* age, when suddenly,
"Hey, Gran'pap!" she says to me,
"Why you rock so slow?" . . . Says I,
"Waitin' fer the cat to die!"

74 *The Happy Little Cripple*

I 'M thist a little crippled boy, an' never goin' to grow
An' git a great big man at all!—'cause Aunty told me so.
When I was thist a baby onc't I falled out of the bed
An' got "The Curv'ture of the Spine"—'at's what the Doc-
tor said.

I never had no Mother nen—fer my Pa runned away
An' dassn't come back here no more—'cause he was drunk
one day

An' stobbed a man in thish-ere town, an' couldn't pay his
fine!

An' nen my Ma she died—an' I got "Curv'ture of the
Spine"!

I'm nine years old! An' you can't guess how much I weigh,
I bet!—

Last birthday I weighed thirty-three!—An' I weigh thirty
yet!

I'm awful little fer my size—I'm purt' nigh littler nan
Some babies is!—an' neighbors all calls me "The Little
Man"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Doc one time he laughed an' said: "I 'spect, first thing
you know,
You'll have a little spike-tail coat an' travel with a show!"
An' nen I laughed—till I looked round an' Aunty was
a-cryin'—
Sometimes she acts like that, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of the
Spine"!

I set—while Aunty's washin'—on my little long-leg stool,
An' watch the little boys an' girls a-skipin' by to school;
An' I peck on the winder, an' holler out an' say:
"Who wants to fight The Little Man 'at dares you all to-
day?"
An' nen the boys climbs on the fence, an' little girls peeks
through,
An' they all says: "'Cause you're so big, you think we're
'feard o' you!"
An' nen they yell, an' shake their fist at me, like I shake
mine—
They're thist in fun, you know, 'cause I got "Curv'ture of
the Spine"!

At evening, when the ironin' 's done, an' Aunty's fixed the
fire,
An' filled an' lit the lamp, an' trimmed the wick an' turned
it higher,
An' fetched the wood all in fer night, an' locked the kitchen
door,
An' stuffed the old crack where the wind blows in up
through the floor—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

She sets the kittle on the coals, an' biles an' makes the tea,
An' fries the liver an' the mush, an' cooks a egg fer me;
An' sometimes—when I cough so hard—her elderberry
wine

Don't go so bad fer little boys with "Curv'ture of the
Spine"!

An' nen when she putts me to bed—an' 'fore she does she's
got

My blanket-nighy, 'at she maked, all good an' warm an'
hot,

Hunged on the rocker by the fire—she sings me hymns, an'
tells

Me 'bout The Good Man—yes, an' Elves, an' Old En-
chanter spells;

An' tells me more—an' more—an' more!—tel I'm *asleep*,
putt' nigh—

Only I thist set up ag'in an' kiss her when she cry,
A-tellin' on 'bout *some* boy's Angel-mother—an' it's
mine! . . .

My *Ma's a Angel*—but *I'm* got "The Curv'ture of the
Spine"!

But Auntys all so childish-like on my account, you see,
I'm 'most afeard she'll be took down—an' 'at's what
bothers *me!*—

'Cause ef my good old Auntys ever would git sick an' die,
I don't know what she'd do in Heaven—till *I* come, by an'
by:—

Fer she's so ust to all my ways, an' ever'thing, you know,
An' no one there like me, to nurse an' worry over so!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Cause all the little childerns there's so straight an' strong
an' fine,
They's nary angel 'bout the place with "Curv'ture of the
Spine"!

NOTE.—The word "thist," as used in foregoing lines, is an occasional childish pronunciation evolved from the word "just"—a word which in child vernacular has manifold supplanters,—such as "jus," "jes," "des," "jis," "dis," "jist," "dist," "ist," and even "gist," with hard *g*. In "thist," as used above, sound "th" as in the word "the."

75 *Christmas Afterthought*

AFTER a thoughtful, almost painful pause,
Bub sighed, "I'm sorry fer old *Santy Claus*:—
They *wuz* no *Santy Claus*, ner *couldn't* be,
When *he wuz* ist a little boy like me!"

76 *In the Night*

WHEN it's night, and no light, too,
Wakin' by yourse'f,
With the old clock mockin' you
On the mantel-she'f;
In the dark—so still and black,
You're afeard you'll hear
Somepin' awful pop and crack,—
"Go to sleep, my dear!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That's what *Mother* says.—And *then's*
When we ain't *afeard*!
Wunder, when we be big mens,
Then 'ul we be skeerd?—
Some night *Mother's* goned away,
And ist *us* is here,
Will The Good Man wake and say,
"Go to sleep, my dear"?

77

When Our Baby Died

WHEN our baby died—
My Ma she ist cried an' cried!
Yes 'n' my Pa *he* cried, too—
An' *I* cried—An' me an' you.—
An' I 'tended like my doll
She cried too—An' ever'—all—
O ist *ever'body* cried
When our baby died!

When our baby died—
Nen I got to took a ride!
'An' we all ist rode an' rode
Clean to Heav'n where baby goed—
Mighty nigh!—An' nen Ma she
Cried ag'in—an' Pa—an' me.—
All but ist the *Angels* cried
When our baby died!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Watchin' things, with droopy head,
And "a-listenun," he said—
"Kind o' listenun above
The old crick to what the wet
Warter was a-talkin' of!"

Jevver hear sich talk as that?
Bothered *Mother* more'n me
What the child was cipher'n' at.—
Come home onc't and said 'at he
Knowed what the snake-feeders thought
When they grit their wings; and knowed
Turkle-talk, when bubbles riz
Over where the old roots grewed
Where he th'owed them pets o' his—
Little turripuns he caught
In the County Ditch and packed
In his pockets days and days!—
Said he knowed what goslin's quacked—
Could tell what the killdees sayes,
And grasshoppers, when they lit
In the crick and "minnies" bit
Off their legs.—"But, *blame!*" sayes he,
Sort o' lookin' clean above
Mother's head and on through me—
(And them eyes!—I see 'em yet!)—
"*Blame!*" he sayes, "ef I kin see,
Er make *out*, jes' what the wet
Warter is a-talkin' of!"

Made me *nervous!* Mother, though,
Said best not to scold the child—
The Good Bein' knowed.—And so

THE HOOSIER BOOK

We was only rickonciled
When he'd be asleep.—And then,
Time, and time, and time again,
We've watched over him, you know—
Her a-sayin' nothin'—jes'
Kind o' smoothin' back his hair,
And, all to herse'f, I guess,
Studyin' up some kind o' prayer
She ain't tried yet.—Onc't she said,
Cotin' Scriptur', " 'He,' " says she,
In a solemn whisper, " 'He
Givuth His beloved sleep!'"
And jes' then I heerd the rain
Strike the shingles, as I turned
Res'less to'rds the wall again.
Pity strong men dast to weep!—
Specially when up above
Thrash! the storm comes down and you
Feel the midnight plum soaked through
Heart and soul, and wunder, too,
What the warter's talkin' of!

Found his hat 'way down below
Hinchman's Ford.—'Ves' Anders he
Rid and fetched it. Mother she
Went *wild* over that, you know—
Hugged it! kissed it!—*Turribul!*
My hopes then was all gone too. . . .
Brung him in, with both hands full
O' warter-lilies—'peared-like new-

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Bloomed fer him—renched whiter still
In the clear rain, mixin' fine
And finer in the noon sunshine. . . .
Winders of the old mill looked
On him where the hill-road crooked
In on through the open gate. . . .
Laid him on the old settee
On the porch there. Heerd the great
Roarin' dam acrost—and we
Heerd a crane cry in amongst
The sycamores—and then a dove
Cutterin' on the mill-roof—then
Heerd the crick, and thought again,
“Now what's it a-talkin' of?”

80 *Old Man's Nursery Rhyme*

IN the jolly yinters
Of the long-ago,
It was not so cold as now—
Oh! No! No!
Then, as I remember,
Snowballs to eat
Were as good as apples now,
And every bit as sweet!

In the jolly winters
Of the dead-and-gone,
Bub was warm as summer,
With his red mitts on,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Just in his little waist-
And-pants all together,
Who ever heard him growl
About cold weather?

In the jolly winters
Of the long-ago—
Was it *half* so cold as now?
Oh! No! No!
Who caught his death o' cold,
Making prints of men
Flat-backed in snow that now's
Twice as cold again?

In the jolly winters
Of the dead-and-gone,
Startin' out rabbit huntin'—
Early as the dawn,—
Who ever froze his fingers,
Ears, heels, or toes,—
Or'd 'a' cared if he had?
Nobody knows!

Nights by the kitchen stove,
Shellin' white and red
Corn in the skillet, and
Sleepin' four abed!

Ah! the jolly winters
Of the long-ago!
We were not as old as now—
Oh! No! No!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

81

Max and Jim

MAX an' Jim,
They're each other's
Fat an' slim
Little brothers.

Max is thin,
An' Jim, the fac's is,
Fat ag'in
As little Max is!

Their Pa 'lowed
He don't know whuther
He's most proud
Of one er th'other!

Their Ma says
They're both so sweet—'m!—
That she guess
She'll haf to eat 'em!

82

The Old Haymow

THE Old Haymow's the place to play
Fer boys, when it's a rainy day!
I good 'eal ruther be up there
Than down in town, er anywhere!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

When I play in our stable-loft,
The good old hay's so dry an' soft,
An' feels so fine, an' smells so sweet,
I 'most ferget to go an' eat.

An' one time onc't I *did* ferget
To go tel dinner was all et,—
An' they had short-cake—an'—Bud he
Hogged up the piece Ma saved fer me!

Nen I won't let him play no more
In our haymow where I keep store
An' got hen-eggs to sell,—an' shoo
The cackle-un old hen out, too!

An' nen, when Aunty she was here
A-visitun from Rensselaer,
An' bringed my little cousin,—*he*
Can come up there an' play with me.

But, after while—when Bud he bets
'At I can't turn no summersetts,
I let him come up, ef he can
Ac' ha'f-way like a gentleman!

83

Guiney-Pigs

GUINEY-PIGS is awful cute,
With their little trimbly snoot
Sniffin' at the pussly that
We bring 'em to nibble at.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Looks like they're so clean an' white,
An' so dainty an' polite,
They could eat like you an' me
When they's company!

Tiltin' down the clover-tops
Till they spill, an' overdrops
The sweet morning dew—Don't you
Think they might have napkins, too?
Ef a guiney-pig was big
As a shore-an'-certain pig,
Nen he wouldn't ac' so fine
When he come to dine.

Nen he'd chomp his jaws an' eat
Things out in the dirty street,
Dirt an' all! An' nen lay down
In mud-holes an' waller rovin'
So the guiney-pigs is best,
'Cause they're nice an' tidiest;
They eat 'most like you an' me
When they's company!

84

The Land of Thus-and-So

"HOW would Willie like to go
To the Land of Thus-and-So?
Everything is proper there—
All the children comb their hair
Smoother than the fur of cats,
Or the nap of high silk hats;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Every face is clean and white
As a lily washed in light;
Never vaguest soil or speck
Found on forehead, throat or neck;
Every little crimped ear,
In and out, as pure and clear
As the cherry-blossom's blow
In the Land of Thus-and-So.

"Little boys that never fall
Down the stairs, or cry at all—
Doing nothing to repent,
Watchful and obedient;
Never hungry, nor in haste—
Tidy shoe-strings always laced;
Never button rudely torn
From its fellows all unworn;
Knickerbockers always new—
Ribbon, tie, and collar, too;
Little watches, worn like men,
Always promptly half-past ten—
Just precisely right, you know,
For the Land of Thus-and-So!

"And the little babies there
Give no one the slightest care—
Nurse has not a thing to do
But be happy and sigh 'Boo!'
While Mamma just nods, and knows
Nothing but to doze and doze:
Never litter round the grate;
Never lunch or dinner late;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Never any household din
Peals without or rings within—
Baby coos nor laughing calls
On the stairs or through the halls—
Just Great Hushes to and fro
Pace the Land of Thus-and-So!

"Oh! the Land of Thus-and-So!
Isn't it delightful, though?"
"Yes," lisped Willie, answering me
Somewhat slow and doubtfully—
"Must be awful nice, but I
Ruther wait till by and by
'Fore I go there—maybe when
I be dead I'll go there *then*.—
But"—the troubled little face
Closer pressed in my embrace—
"Le's don't never *ever* go
To the Land of Thus-and-So!"

85

Grandfather Squeers

"**M**Y grandfather Squeers," said The Raggedy Man,
As he solemnly lighted his pipe and began—

"The most indestructible man, for his years,
And the grandest on earth, was my grandfather Squeers!

"He said, when he rounded his threescore-and-ten,
'I've the hang of it now and can do it again!'

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"He had frozen his heels so repeatedly, he
Could tell by them just what the weather would be;

"And would laugh and declare, 'while *the Almanac* would
Most falsely prognosticate, *he* never could!

"Such a hale constitution had grandfather Squeers
That, though he'd used '*navy*' for sixty-odd years,

"He still chewed a dime's worth six days of the week,
While the seventh he passed with a chew in each *cheek*.

"Then my grandfather Squeers had a singular knick
Of sitting around on the small of his back,

"With his legs like a letter Y stretched o'er the grate
Wherein 'twas his custom to ex-pec-tor-ate.

"He was fond of tobacco in *manifold* ways,
And would sit on the door-step, of sunshiny days,

"And smoke leaf-tobacco he'd raised strictly for
The pipe he'd used all through the Mexican War."

And The Raggedy Man said, refilling the bowl
Of his *own* pipe and leisurely picking a coal

From the stove with his finger and thumb, "You can see
What a tee-nacious habit he's fastened on me!

"And my grandfather Squeers took a special delight
In pruning his corns every Saturday night

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"With a horn-handled razor, whose edge he excused
By saying 'twas one that his grandfather used;

"And, though deeply etched in the haft of the same
Was the ever-euphonious Wostenholm's name,

"'Twas my grandfather's custom to boast of the blade
As 'a Seth Thomas razor—the best ever made!

"No Old Settlers' Meeting, or Pioneers' Fair,
Was complete without grandfather Squeers in the chair,

"To lead off the program by telling folks how
'He used to shoot deer where the Court-house stands now!—

"How he felt, of a truth, to live over the past,
When the country was wild and unbroken and vast,

"That the little log cabin was just plenty fine
For himself, his companion, and fambly of nine!—

"When they didn't have even a pump, or a tin,
But drunk surface-water, year out and year in,

"From the old-fashioned gourd that was sweeter, by odds,
Than the goblets of gold at the lips of the gods!"

Then The Raggedy Man paused to plaintively say:
It was clockin' along to'rds the close of the day!—

And he'd ought to get back to his work on the lawn,
Then dreamily blabbered his pipe and went on:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"His teeth were imperfect—my grandfather owned
That he couldn't eat oysters unless they were 'boned';

"And his eyes were so weak, and so feeble of sight,
He couldn't sleep with them unless, every night,

"He put on his spectacles—all he possessed,—
Three pairs—with his goggles on top of the rest.

"And my grandfather always, retiring at night,
Blew down the lamp-chimney to put out the light;

"Then he'd curl up on edge like a shaving, in bed,
And puff and smoke pipes in his sleep, it is said:

"And would snore oftentimes, as the legends relate,
Till his folks were wrought up to a terrible state,—

"Then he'd snort, and rear up, and roll over; and there
In the subsequent hush they could hear him chew air.

"And so glaringly bald was the top of his head
That many's the time he has musingly said,

"As his eyes journeyed o'er its reflex in the glass,—
'I must set out a few signs of *Keep Off the Grass!*'

"So remarkably deaf was my grandfather Squeers
That he had to wear lightning-rods over his ears

"To even hear thunder—and oftentimes then
He was forced to request it to thunder again."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

86 *Little Mandy's Christmas-Tree*

LITTLE Mandy and her Ma
'S porest folks you ever saw!—
Lived in porest house in town,
Where the fence 'uz all tore down.

And no front-door steps at all—
Ist a' old box 'g'inst the wall;
And no door-knob on the door
Outside.—*My!* but they 'uz pore!

Wuz no winder-shutters on,
And some of the *winders* gone,
And where *they* 'uz broke they'd pas'e
Ist brown paper 'crost the place.

Tell you! when it's *winter there*,
And the snow ist ever'where,
Little Mandy's Ma she say
'Spec' they'll freeze to death some day.

Wunst my Ma and me—when we
Be'n to church, and's goin' to be
Chris'mus purty soon,—we went
There—like the Committee sent.

And-sir! when we're in the door,
Wuz no carpet on the floor,
And no fire—and heels-and-head
Little Mandy's tucked in bed!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And her Ma telled *my* Ma she
Got no coffee but ist tea,
And fried mush—and's all they had
Sence her health broke down so bad.

Nen Ma hug and hold me where
Little Mandy's layin' there;
And she kiss her, too, and nen
Mandy kiss my Ma again.

And my Ma she telled her *we*
Goin' to have a Chris'mus-Tree,
At the Sund'y-School, 'at's fer
ALL the childern, and fer *her*.

Little Mandy *think*—nen she
Say, "What is a Chris'mus-Tree?"
Nen my Ma she gived *her* Ma
Somepin' 'at I never saw.

And say she *must* take it,—and
She ist maked her keep her hand
Wite close shut,—and nen she *kiss*
Her hand—shut ist like it is.

Nen we comed away. . . . And nen
When it's Chris'mus Eve again,
And all of us childerns be
At the Church and Chris'mus-Tree—

And all git our toys and things
'At old Santy Claus he brings
And puts on the Tree;—wite where
The *big* Tree 'uz standin' there,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And the things 'uz all tooked down,
And the childerns, all in town,
Got their presents—nen we see
They's a *little* Chris'mus-Tree

Wite *behind* the *big* Tree—so
We can't see till *nen*, you know,—
And it's all ist loaded down
With the purtiest things in tow!

And the teacher smile and say:
"This-here Tree 'at's hid away
It's marked '*Little Mandy's Tree*.'—
Little Mandy! Where is she?"

Nen nobody say a word.—
Stillest place you ever heard!—
Till a man tiptoe up where
Teacher's still a-waitin' there.

Nen the man he whispers, so
Ist the *Teacher* hears, you know.
Nen he tiptoe back and go
Out the big door—ist so slow!

Little Mandy, though, *she* don't
Answer—and Ma say "*she* won't
Never, though each year they'll be
'*Little Mandy's* Chris'mus-Tree'

Fer pore childern"—my Ma says—
And *Committee* say they guess
"Little Mandy's Tree" 'ull be
Bigger than the *other* Tree!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

87 *The Funniest Thing in the World*

THE funniest thing in the world, I know,
Is watchin' the monkeys 'at's in the show!—
Jumpin' an' runnin' an' racin' roun',
'Way up the top o' the pole; nen down!
First they're here, an' nen they're there,
An' ist a'most any an' ever'where!—
Screechin' an' scratchin' wherever they go,
They're the funniest thing in the world, I know!

They're the funniest thing in the world, I think:—
Funny to watch 'em eat an' drink;
Funny to watch 'em a-watchin' us,
An' actin' 'most like grown folks does!—
Funny to watch 'em p'tend to be
Skeered at their tail 'at they happen to see;—
But the funniest thing in the world they do
Is never to laugh, like me an' you!

88 *Little Johnts's Chris'mus*

WE got it up a-purpose, jes' fer little Johnts, you know;
His mother was so pore an' all, an' had to manage
so.—

Jes' bein' a War-widder, an' her pension mighty slim,
She'd take in weavin', er work out, er anything fer him!

An' little Johnts was purty-like—but law, the worse he
had!—

You'd want to kind o' pity him, but couldn't, very bad,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

His pants o' army-blanket an' his coat o' faded blue
Kep' hintin' of his father like, an' pity wouldn't do!..

So we collogued together, onc't, one winter-time, 'at we—
Jes' me an' mother an' the girls, an' Wilse, John-Jack an'
Free—

Would jine an' git up little Johnts, by time 'at Chris'mus
come,
Some sort o' doin's, don't you know, 'at would su'prise him
some.

An' so, all on the quiet, Mother she turns in an' gits ..
Some blue-janes—cuts an' makes a suit; an' then sets down
an' knits

A pair o' little galluses to go 'long with the rest—
An' putts in a red-flannen back an' buckle on the vest.—

The little feller'd be'n so much around our house, you see,
An' be'n sich he'p to her an' all, an' handy as could be,
'At Mother couldn't do too much fer little Johnts—No,
sir!

She ust to jes' declare 'at "he was meat-an'-drink to her!"

An' Piney, Lide, an' Madaline they watch their chance an'
rid

To Fountaintown with Lijey's folks; an' bought a book,
they did,

O' fairy tales, with pictur's in; an' got a little pair
O' red-top boots 'at John-Jack said he'd be'n a-pricin' there.

An' Lide got him a little sword, an' Madaline, a drum;
An' shootin'-crackers—Lawzy-day! an' they're so danger-
some!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Piney, ever' time the rest 'ud buy some other toy,
She'd take an' turn in then an' buy more candy fer the boy!

"Well," thinks-says-I, when they got back, "*your* pocket-
books is dry!"—

But little John'ts was there hisse'f that afternoon, so I—
Well, *all* of us kep' mighty mum, tel we got him away
By tellin' him be shore an' come to-morry—Chris'mus
Day—

An' fetch *his mother* 'long with him! An' how he scud
acrost

The fields—his towhead, in the dusk, jes' like a streak o'
frost!—

His comfert flutter'n' as he run—an' old Tige, don't you
know,

A-jumpin' high fer rabbits an' a-plowin' up the snow!

It must 'a' be'n 'most *ten* that night afore we got to bed—
With Wilse an' John-Jack he'ppin' us; an' Freeman in the
shed,

An' Lide out with the lantern while he trimmed the Chris'-
mus Tree

Out of a little scrub-oak-top 'at suited to a "T"!

All night I dream'p' o' hearin' things a-skulkin' round the
place—

An' "Old Kriss," with his whiskers off, an' freckles on his
face—

An' reindeers, shaped like shavin'-hosses at the cooper-
shop,

A-stickin' down the chimbly, with their heels out at the top!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

By time 'at Mother got me up 'twas plumb daylight an'
more—

The front yard full o' neighbors all a-crowdin' round the
door,

With John's mother leadin'; yes—an' little John's hisse'f,
Set up on Freeman's shoulder, like a jug up on the she'f!

Of course I can't describe it when they all got in to where
We'd congered up the Chris'mus Tree an' all the fixin's
there!—

Per all the shouts o' laughture—clappin' hands, an' crackin'
jokes,

Was heap o' kissin' goin' on amongst the women-folks:—

Per, lo-behold-ye! there they had that young-un!—An' his
chin

A-wobblin' like;—an', shore enough, at last he started in—

An'—sich another bellerin', in all my mortal days,

I never heerd, er 'spect to hear, in woe's app'inted ways!

An' Mother grabs him up an' says: "It's more'n he can
bear—

It's all too sudden fer the child, an' too su'prisin'!—
There!"

"Oh, no it ain't"—sobbed little John's—"I ain't su'prised—
but I'm

A-cryin' 'cause I watched you all, an' knowed it all the
time!"

89

The Boys' Candidate

LAS' time 'at Uncle Sidney come,
 He bringed a watermelon home—
 An' half the boys in town
 Come taggin' after him.—An' he
 Says, when we et it,—“*Graacious me!*
'S the boy-house fell down!’”

90

The Bumblebee

YOU better not fool with a Bumblebee!—
 Ef you don't think they can sting—you'll see!
 They're lazy to look at, an' kind o' go.
 Buzzin' an' bummin' aroun' so slow,
 An' ac' so slouchy an' all fagged out,
 Danglin' their legs as they drone about
 The hollyhawks 'at they can't climb in
 'Ithout ist a-tumble-in out ag'in!
 Wunst I watched one climb clean 'way
 In a jimson-blossom, I did, one day,—
 An' I ist grabbed it—an' nen let go—
 An' “Ooh-ooh! Honey! I told ye so!”
 Says The Raggedy Man; an' he ist run
 An' pullt out the stinger, an' don't laugh none,
 An' says: “They *has* be'n folks, I guess,
 'At thought I wüz predjudust, more er less,—
 Yit I still muntain 'at a Bumblebee.
 Wears out his welcome too quick fer me!”

THE HOOSIER BOOK

91 *When the World Bu'sts Through*

[CASUALLY SUGGESTED BY AN EARTHQUAKE]

WHERE'S a boy a-goin',
An' what's he goin' to do,
An' how's he goin' to do it,
When the world bu'sts through?
Ma she says "she can't tell
What we're comin' to!"
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered
Clean—plum—through!"

S'pose we'd be a-playin'
Out in the street,
An' the ground 'ud split up
'Bout forty feet!—
Ma says "she ist knows
We 'ud tumble in";
An' Pop says "he bets you
Nen we wouldn't grin!"

S'pose we'd ist be 'tendin'
Like we had a show,
Down in the stable
Where we mustn't go.—
Ma says, "The earthquake
Might make it fall";
An' Pop says, "More'n like
Swaller barn an' all!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Landy! ef we both wuz
Runnin' 'way from school,
Out in the shady woods
Where it's all so cool!—
Ma says "a big tree
Might squish our head";
An' Pop says, "Chop 'em out
Both—killed—dead!"

But where's a boy goin',
An' what's he goin' to do,
An' how's he goin' to do it,
Ef the world bu'sts through?
Ma she says "she can't tell
What we're comin' to!"
An' Pop says "he's ist skeered
Clean—plum—through!"

92

A Prospective Glimpse

JANEY Pettibone's the best
Little girl an' purtiest
In this town! an' lives next door,
Up-stairs over their old store.

Little Janey Pettibone
An' her Ma lives all alone,—
'Cause her Pa broke up, an' nen
Died 'cause they ain't rich again.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Little Janey's Ma she sews
Fer my Ma sometimes, an' goes
An' gives music-lessons—where
People's got pianers there.

But when Janey Pettibone
Grows an' grows, like I'm a-growin',
Nen I'm go' to keep a store,
An' sell things—an' sell some more—

Till I'm ist as rich!—An' nen
Her Ma can be rich again,—
Ef I'm rich enough to own
Little Janey Pettibone!

The Old Tramp

A' OLD Tramp slep' in our stable wunst,
An' The Raggedy Man he caught
An' roust him up, an' chased him off
Clean out through our back lot!

An' th' old Tramp hollered back an' said,—
"You're a party man!—You air!—
With a pair o' eyes like two fried eggs,
An' a nose like a Barflutt pear!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

94

The Pet Coon

NOEY Bixler ketches him, an' fetches him in to me
When he's ist a little teeny-weeny baby-coon
'Bout as big as little pups, an' tied him to a tree;
An' Pa gived Noey fifty cents, when he come home at
noon.
Nen he buyed a chain fer him, an' little collar, too,
An' sawed a hole in a old tub an' turnt it upside down;
An' little feller'd stay in there and won't come out fer you—
'Tendin' like he's kind o' skeered o' boys 'at lives in town.

Now he ain't afeard a bit! he's ist so fat an' tame,
We on'y chain him up at night, to save the little chicks.
Holler "Greedy! Greedy!" to him, an' he knows his name,
An' here he'll come a-waddle-un, up fer any tricks!
He'll climb up my leg, he will, an' waller in my lap,
An' poke his little black paws 'way in my pockets where
They's beechnuts, er chinkypins, er any little scrap
Of anything 'at's good to eat—an' he don't care!
An' he's as spunky as you please, an' don't like dogs at
all.—
Billy Miller's black-an'-tan tackled him one day,
An' "Greedy" he ist kind o' doubled all up like a ball;
An' Billy's dog he gived a yelp er two an' runned away!
An' nen when Billy fighted me, an' hit me with a bone,
An' Ma she purt' nigh ketched him as he dodged an'
scooted through
The fence, she says, "You better let my little boy alone!
Er 'Greedy,' next he whips yer dog, shall whip you, too!"

WHEN Little Claude was naughty wunst
 At dinner-time, an' said
 He won't say "*Thank you*" to his Ma,
 She maked him go to bed
 An' stay two hours an' not git up,—
 So when the clock struck Two,
 Nen Claude says,—"*Thank you, Mr. Clock,*
 I'm much obleeged to you!"

I RICKOLLECT the little tad, back, years and years
 ago—
 "The Preacher's Boy" that every one despised and hated
 so!
 A meek-faced little feller, with white eyes and foxy hair,
 And a look like he expected ser'ous trouble everywhere:
 A sort o' fixed expression of suspicion in his glance;
 His bare feet always scratched with briers; and green
 stains on his pants;
 Molasses-marks along his sleeves; his cap-rim turned be-
 hind—
 And so it is "The Preacher's Boy" is brought again to
 mind!

My fancy even brings the sly marauder back so plain,
 I see him jump our garden-fence and slip off down the
 lane;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I seem to holler at him and git back the old reply:
"Oh, no: your peaches is too green fer such a worm as I!"
Fer he scorned his father's phrases—every holy one he
had—

"As good a man," folks put it, "as that boy of his was
bad!"

And again from their old buggy-shed, I hear the "rod un-
spared"—

Of course that never "spoiled the child" for which nobody
cared!

If any neighbor ever found his gate without a latch,
Or rines around the edges of his watermelon-patch;
His pasture-bars left open; or his pump-spout chocked with
clay,

He'd swear 'twas "that infernal Preacher's Boy," right
away!

When strings was stretched acrost the street at night, and
some one got

An everlastin' tumble, and his nose broke, like as not,
And laid it on "The Preacher's Boy"—no powers, low ner
high,

Could ever quite substantiate that boy's alibi!

And did *nobody* like the boy?—Well, all the *pets* in town
Would eat out of his fingers; and canaries would come
down

And leave their swingin' perches and their fish-bone jist to
pick

The little warty knuckles that the dogs would leap to lick.—
No little snarlin', snappin' fiste but what would leave his
bone

To foller, ef *he* whistled, in that tantalizin' tone

THE HOOSIER BOOK

That made a goods-box whittler blasphemously protest
"He couldn't tell, 'twixt dog and boy, which one was on-
riest!"

'Twas such a little cur as this one't, when the crowd was
thick

Along the streets, a drunken corner-leafer tried to kick,
When a sudden foot behind him tripped him up, and falling
so

He "marked his man," and jerked his gun—drawed up and
let 'er go!

And the crowd swarmed round the victim—holding close
against his breast

The little dog unharmed, in arms that still, as they caressed,
Grew rigid in their last embrace, as with a smile of joy
He recognized the dog was saved. So died "The Preach-
er's Boy"!

When it appeared, before the Squire, that fatal pistol-ball
Was fired at "a dangerous beast," and not the boy at all,
And the facts set forth established—it was like-befittin'
then

To order out a possy of the "city councilmen"
To kill *the dog*! But, strange to tell, they searched the
country round,
And never hide-ner-hair of that "said" dog was ever found!
And, somehow, *then* I sort o' thought—and half-way think,
to-day—

The spirit of "The Preacher's Boy" had whistled him away.

97

An Impetuous Resolve

WHEN little Dickie Swope's a man,
 He's go' to be a Sailor;
 An' little Hamey Tinchler, he's
 A-go' to be a Tailor;
 Bud Mitchell, he's a-go' to be
 A stylish Carriage-Maker;
 An' when I grow a grea'-big man,
 I'm go' to be a Baker!
 An' Dick'll buy his sailor-suit
 'O' Hame; an' Hame'll take it
 An' buy as fine a double-rig
 As ever Bud kin make it:
 An' nen all three'll drive roun' fer me,
 An' we'll drive off togevvver,
 A-slingin' pie-crust 'long the road
 Ferever an' ferever!

98

The Man in the Moon

S AID The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon:
 My Sakes!

What a lot o' mistakes
 Some little folks makes on The Man in the Moon!
 But people that's be'n up to see him, like me,
 And calls on him frequent and intimuttly,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Might drop a few facts that would interest you
Clean!

Through!—

If you wanted 'em to—

Some *actual* facts that might interest you!

O The Man in the Moon has a crick in his back;
Wheel!

Whimm!

Ain't you sorry for him?

And a mole on his nose that is purple and black;
And his eyes are so weak that they water and run
If he dares to *dream* even he looks at the sun,—
So he jes' dreams of stars, as the doctors advise—
My!

Eyes!

But isn't he wise—

To jes' dream of stars, as the doctors advise?

And The Man in the Moon has a boil on his ear—
Wheel!

Whing!

What a singular thing!

I know! but these facts are authentic, my dear,—
There's a boil on his ear; and a corn on his chin—
He calls it a dimple—but dimples stick in—
Yet it might be a dimple turned over, you know!

Whang!

Ho!

Why, certainly so!—

It might be a dimple turned over, you know!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And The Man in the Moon has a rheumatic knee—

Gee!

Whizz!

What a pity that is!

And his toes have worked round where his heels ought to
be.—

So whenever he wants to go North he goes *South*,
And comes back with porridge-crumbs all round his *mouth*,
And he brushes them off with a Japanese fan,

Whing!

Whann!

What a marvelous man!

What a very remarkably marvelous man!

And The Man in the Moon, sighed The Raggedy Man,

Gits!

So!

Sullonesome, you know,—

Up there by hisse'f sence creation began!—

That when I call on him and then come away,

He grabs me and holds me and begs me to stay,—

Till—*Well!* if it wasn't fer *Jimmy-cum-jim*,

Dadd!

Limbl!

I'd go pardners with him—

Jes' jump my job here and be pardners with *him!*

Billy Goodin'

*A big piece o' pie, and a big piece o' puddin'—
I laïd it all by fer little Billy Goodin'!*

—BOY-POET.

LOOK so neat an' sweet in all yer frills an' fancy pleatin'!
Better shet yer kitchen, though, afore you go to Meet-
in'!

Better hide yer mince-meat an' stewed fruit an' plums!
Better hide yer pound-cake an' bresh away the crumbs!
Better hide yer cubbord-key when Billy Goodin' comes,
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

Sight o' Sund'y-doin's 'at ain't done in Meetin'!
Sun acrost yer garden-patch a-pourin' an' a-beatin';
Meller apples drappin' in the weeds an' roun' the groun'—
Clingstones an' sugar-pears a-ist a-plunkin' down!—
Better kind o' comb the grass 'fore Billy comes aroun'
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

Billy Goodin' ain't a-go' to go to any Meetin'!
We 'ull watch an' ketch an' give the little sneak a beatin'!—
Better hint *we* want'o stay 'n' snoop yer grapes an' plums!
Better eat 'em all yerse'f an' suck yer stingy thumbs!—
Won't be nothin' anyhow when Billy Goodin' comes!
A-eatin'! an' a-eatin'! an' a-eatin'!

100 *Prior to Miss Belle's Appearance*

WHAT makes you come *here* fer, Mister,
So much to *our* house?—Say?

Come to see our big sister!

An' Charley he says 'at you kissed her

An' he ketched you, th'uther day!—

Didn't you, Charley?—But we p'omised Belle

An' crossed our heart to never to tell—

'Cause *she* gived us some o' them-er

Chawk'lut-drops 'at you bringed to her!

Charley he's my little b'uther—

An' we has a-mostest fun,

Don't we, Charley?—Our Muther,

Whenever we whips one-another,

Tries to whip *us*—an' we *run*—

Don't we, Charley?—An' nen, bime-by,

Nen she gives us cake—an' pie—

Don't she, Charley?—when we come in

An' p'omise never to do it ag'in!

He's named Charley.—I'm *Willie*—

An' I'm got the purtiest name!

But Uncle Bob *he* calls me "Billy"—

Don't he, Charley?—'N' our filly

We named "Billy," the same

Ist-like *me*! An' our Ma said

'At "Bob puts foolishnuss into our head!"

Didn't she, Charley?—An' *she* don't know

Much about *boys*! 'Cause Bob said so!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Baby's a funniest feller!

Nain't no hair on his head—

Is they, Charley?—It's meller

Wite up there! An' ef Belle er

Us ask wuz *we* that way, Ma said,—

Yes; an' yer *Pa's* head wuz soft as that,

An' it's that way yet!—An' Pa grabs his hat

An' says, "Yes, childern, she's right about Pa—

'Cause that's the reason he married yer Ma!"

An' our Ma says 'at "Belle couldn'

Ketch nothin' at all but ist '*bows*'"—

An' *Pa* says 'at "you're soft as puddun!"—

An' *Uncle Bob* says "you're a good-un—

'Cause he can tell by yer nose!"—

Didn' he, Charley?—An' when Belle'll play

In the poller on th' pianer, some day,

Bob makes up funny songs about you,

Till she gits mad—like he wants her to!

Our sister *Fanny* she's '*leven*

Years old! 'At's mucher 'an I—

Ain't it, Charley? . . . I'm seven!—

But our sister *Fanny's* in *Heaven*!

Nere's where you go ef you die!—

Don't you, Charley!—Nen you has *wings*—

Ist like *Fanny*!—an' *purtiest things*!—

Don't you, Charley?—An' nen you can *fly*—

Ist fly—an' *ever*'thing! . . . Wisht I'd die!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

101

She "Displains" It

"HAD, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

So contended Bess and May—

Neighbor children, who were boasting
Of their grandmamas, one day.

"Had, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

All the difference begun

By May's saying she'd *two* grandmas—
While poor Bess had only one.

"Had, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

Tossing curls, and kinks of friz!—

"How could you have *two* gran'muvvers
When ist *one* is all they is?"

"Had, too!"

"*Hadn't, neither!*"

'Cause ef you had *two*," said Bess,

"You'd *displain* it!" Then May answered,

"*My gran'mas wuz twins*, I guess!

IT was a Jolly Miller lived on the River Dee;
 He looked upon his piller, and there he found a flea;
 "O Mr. Flea! you have bit me,
 And you shall shorely die!"
 So he scrunched his bones ag'inst the stones—
 And there he let him lie!

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he laughed and told his wife,
 And she laughed fit to kill her, and dropped her carving-
 knife!—

"O Mr. Flea!" "Ho-ho!" "Tee-hee!"
 They *both* laughed fit to kill,
 Until the sound did almost drown
 The rumble of the mill!

*"Laugh on, my Jolly Miller! and Missus Miller, too!—
 But there's a weeping-willer will soon wave over you!"*
 The voice was all so awful small—
 So very small and slim!—
 He durst' infer that it was her,
 Ner her infer 'twas him!

That night the Jolly Miller, says he, "It's, Wifey dear,
 That cat o' yourn, I'd kill her!—her actions is so queer,—
 She's rubbin' 'g'inst the grindstone-legs,
 And yowlin' at the sky—
 And I 'low the moon hain't greener
 Than the yaller of her eye!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And as the Jolly Miller went chuckle-un to bed,
Was *Somepin'* jerked his pillar from underneath his head!
"O Wife," says he, on-easi-lee,
"Fetch here that lantern there!"
But *Somepin'* means in thunder-tones,
"You tetch it ef you dare!"

'Twas then the Jolly Miller he trimbled and he quailed—
And his wife choked until her breath come back 'n' she
 wailed!
And "Oh!" cried she, "*it is the Flea,*
 All white and pale and wann—
He's got you in his clutches, and
 He's bigger than a man!"

"Ho! ho! my Jolly Miller" (*fer 'twas the Flea, fer shore!*),
"I reckon you'll not rack my bones ner scrunch 'em any
 more!"

Then the Flea-Ghost he grabbed him clos't,
 With many a ghastly smile,
And from the door-step stooped and hopped
 About four hunderd mile!

ONE time, when we'z at Aunty's house—
 'Way in the country!—where
They's ist but woods—an' pigs, an' cows—
 An' all's outdoors an' air!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' orchurd-swing; an' churry-trees—
An' *churries* in 'em!—Yes, an' these—
Here redhead birds steals all they please,
An' tetch 'em ef you dare!—
W'y, wunst, one time, when we wuz there,
We et out on the porch!

Wite where the cellar door wuz shut
The table wuz; an' I
Let Auntie set by me an' cut
My vittuls up—an' pie.
'Tuz awful funny! I could see
The redheads in the churry-tree;
An' beehives, where you got to be
So keerful, goin' by;—
An' "Comp'ny" there an' all!—an' we—
We et out on the porch!

An' I ist et *p'surves* an' things
'At Ma don't 'low me to—
An' *chickun-gizzards*—(don't like *wings*
Like *Parunts* does! do *you?*)
An' all the time the wind blowed there,
An' I could feel it in my hair,
An' ist smell clover *ever'*where!—
An' a' old redhead flew
Purt' nigh wite over my high-chair,
When we et on the porch!

The Raggedy Man

O THE Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa;
 An' he's the goodest man ever you saw!
 He comes to our house every day,
 An' waters the horses, an' feeds 'em hay;
 An' he opens the shed—an' we all ist laugh
 When he drives out our little old wobble-ly calf;
 An' nen—ef our hired girl says he can—
 He milks the cow fer 'Lizabuth Ann.—
 Ain't he a' awful good Raggedy Man?
 Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

W'y, The Raggedy Man—he's ist so good,
 He splits the kindlin' an' chops the wood;
 An' nen he spades in our garden, too,
 An' does most things 'at boys can't do.—
 He clumbed clean up in our big tree
 An' shooked a' apple down fer me—
 An' 'nother 'n', too, fer 'Lizabuth Ann—
 An' 'nother 'n', too, fer The Raggedy Man.—
 Ain't he a' awful kind Raggedy Man?
 Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man one time say he
 Pick' roast' rambos from a' orchurd-tree,
 An' et 'em—all ist roast' an' hot!—
 An' it's so, too!—'cause a corn-crib got
 Afire one time an' all burn down
 On "The Smoot Farm," 'bout four mile from town—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

On "The Smoot Farm"! Yes—an' the hired han'
'At worked there nen 'uz The Raggedy Man!—
Ain't he the beatin'est Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man's so good an' kind
He'll be our "horsey," an' "haw" an' mind
Ever'thing 'at you make him do—
An' won't run off—'less you want him to!
I drived him wunst way down our lane
An' he got skeered, when it 'menced to rain,
An' ist rared up an' squealed and run
Purt' nigh away!—an' it's all in fun!
Nen he skeered *ag'in* at a' old tin can . . .
Whoa! y' old runaway Raggedy Man!
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' The Raggedy Man, he knows most rhymes,
An' tells 'em, ef I be good, sometimes:
Knows 'bout Giunts, an' Griffuns, an' Elves,
An' the Squidgicum-Squees 'at swallers the'rselves!
An', wite by the pump in our pasture-lot,
He showed me the hole 'at the Wunks is got,
'At lives 'way deep in the ground, an' can
Turn into me, er 'Lizabuth Ann!
Er Ma, er Pa, er The Raggedy Man!
Ain't he a funny old Raggedy Man?
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' wunst, when The Raggedy Man come late,
An' pigs ist root' thue the garden-gate,
He 'tend like the pigs 'uz *bears* an' said,
"Old Bear-shooter'll shoot 'em dead!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' race' an' chase' 'em, an' they'd ist run
When he pint his hoe at 'em like it's a gun
An' go "Bang!—Bang!" nen 'tend he stan'
An' load up his gun ag'in! Raggedy Man!
He's an old Bear-shooter Raggedy Man!
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

An' sometimes The Raggedy Man lets on
We're little *prince-children*, an' old King's gone
To git more money, an' lef' us there—
And *Robbers* is ist thick ever'where;
An' nen—ef we all won't cry, fer *shore*—
The Raggedy Man he'll come and "'splore
The Castul-halls," an' steal the "gold"—
An' steal *us*, too, an' grab an' hold
An' pack us off to his old "Cave"!—An'
Haymow's the "cave" o' The Raggedy Man!—
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

The Raggedy Man—one time; when he
Wuz makin' a little bow-'n'-orry fer me,
Says "When you're big like your Pa is,
Air you go' to keep a fine store like his—
An' be a rich merchunt—an' wear fine clothes?—
Er what *air* you go' to be, goodness knows?"
An' nen he laughed at 'Lizabuth Ann,
An' I says "'M go' to be a Raggedy Man!—
I'm ist go' to be a nice Raggedy Man!"
Raggedy! Raggedy! Raggedy Man!

A Boy's Mother

MY mother she's so good to me,
Ef I was good as I could be,
I couldn't be as good—no, sir!—
Can't any boy be good as her!

She loves me when I'm glad er sad;
She loves me when I'm good er bad;
An', what's a funniest thing, she says
She loves me when she punishes.

I don't like her to punish me.—
That don't hurt,—but it hurts to see
Her cryin'.—Nen *I* cry; an' nen
We both cry an' be good again.

She loves me when she cuts an' sews
My little cloak an' Sund'y clothes;
An' when my Pa comes home to tea,
She loves him most as much as me.

She laughs an' tells him all I said,
An' grabs me up an' pats my head:
An' I hug *her*, an' hug my Pa
An' love him purt' nigh as much as Ma.

The Fishing Party

WUNST we went a-fishin'—Me
 An' my Pa an' Ma all three,
 When they wuz a pic-nic, 'way
 Out to Hanch's Woods, one day.

An' they wuz a crick out there,
 Where the fishes is, an' where
 Little boys 'taint big an' strong,
 Better have their folks along!

My Pa he ist fished an' fished!
 An' my Ma she said she wished:
 Me an' her was home; an' Pa
 Said he wished so worse'n Ma.

Pa said ef you talk, er say
 Anything, er sneeze, er play,
 Hain't no fish, alive er dead,
 Ever go' to bite! he said.

Purt' nigh dark in town when we
 Got back home; an' Ma says she,
Now she'll have a fish fer shore!
 An' she buyed one at the store.

Nen at supper, Pa he won't
 Eat no fish, an' says he don't
 Like 'em.—An' he pounded me
 When I choked! . . . Ma, didn't he?

107 *The Boy Lives on Our Farm*

THE Boy lives on our Farm, he's not
 Afeard o' horses none!
 An' he can make 'em lope, er trot,
 Er rack, er pace, er run.
 Sometimes he drives two horses, when
 He comes to town an' brings
 A wagon-full o' 'taters nen,
 An' roastin'-ears an' things.

Two horses is "a team," he says,—
 An' when you drive er hitch,
 The right-un's a "near-horse," I guess,
 Er "off"—I don't know which.—
 The Boy lives on our Farm, he told
 Me, too, 'at he can see,
 By lookin' at their teeth, how old
 A horse is, to a T!

I'd be the gladdest boy alive
 Ef I knowed much as that,
 An' could stand up like him an' drive,
 An' ist push back my hat,
 Like he comes skallyhootin' through
 Our alley, with one arm
 A-wavin' Fare-ye-well! to you—
 The Boy lives on our Farm!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

108

The Runaway Boy

WUNST I sassed my Pa, an' he
Won't stand that, an' punished me,—
Nen when he wuz gone that day,
I slipped out an' runned away.

I tooked all my copper-cents,
An' clumbed over our back fence
In the jimpson-weeds 'at growed
Ever'where all down the road.

Nen I got out there, an' nen
I runned some—an' runned again
When I met a man 'at led
A big cow 'at shooked her head.

I went down a long, long lane
Where was little pigs a-play'n';
An' a grea'-big pig went "Booh!"
An' jumped up, an' skeered me too.

Nen I scampered past, an' they
Was somebody hollered "Hey!"
An' I ist looked ever'where,
An' they wuz nobody there.

I want to, but I'm 'fraid to try
To go back. . . . An' by-an'-by,
Somepin' hurts my th'roat inside—
An' I want my Ma—an' cried.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nen a grea'-big girl come through
Where's a gate, an' telled me who
Am I? an' ef I tell where
My home's at she'll show me there.

But I couldn't ist but tell
What's my *name*; an' she says "well,"
An' she tooked me up an' says
"She know where I live, she guess."

Nen she telled me hug wite close
Round her neck!—an' off she goes
Skippin' up the street! An' nen
Purty soon I'm home again.

An' my Ma, when she kissed me,
Kissed the big girl too, an' *she*
Kissed me—ef I p'omise *shore*
I won't run away no more!

OUR hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann;
An' she can cook best things to eat!
She ist puts dough in our pie-pan,
An' pours in somepin' 'at's good and sweet;
An' nen she salts it all on top
With cinnamon; an' nen she'll stop
An' stoop an' slide it, ist as slow,
In th' old cook-stove, so's 'twon't slop

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' git all spilled; nen bakes it, so
It's custard pie, first thing you know!
An' nen she'll say:
"Clear out o' my way!
They's time fer work, an' time fer play!—
Take yer dough, an' run, child, run!
Er I cain't git no cookin' done!"

When our hired girl 'tends like she's mad,
An' says folks got to walk the chalk
When *she's* around, er wisht they had,
I play out on our porch an' talk
To Th' Raggedy Man 'at mows our lawn;
An' he says "*Whew!*" an' nen leans on
His old crook-scythe, and blinks his eyes
An' sniffs all round an' says, "I swawn!
Ef my old nose don't tell me lies,
It 'pears like I smell custard-pies!"
An' nen *he'll* say,
"Clear out o' my way!
They's time fer work, an' time fer play!
Take yer dough, an' run, child, run!
Er *she* cain't git no cookin' done!"

Wunst our hired girl, when she
Got the supper, an' we all et,
An' it was night, an' Ma an' me
An' Pa went wher' the "Social" met,—
An' nen when we come home, an' see
A light in the kitchen-door, an' we
Heerd a maccordeun, Pa says "Lan'-
O'-Gracious! who can *her* beau be?"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' I marched in, an' 'Lizabuth' Ann
Wuz parchin' corn fer The Raggedy Man!

Better say

"Clear out o' the way!

They's time fer work, an' time fer play!

Take the hint, an' run, child, run!

Er we cain't git no courtin' done!"

GREEN FIELDS AND RUNNING BROOKS

110. *On the Banks O' Deer Crick*

ON THE banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place fer
me!

Worter slidin' past ye jes' as clair as it kin be:
See yer shadder in it, and the shadder o' the sky,
And the shadder o' the buzzard as he goes a-lazin' by;
Shadder o' the pizen-vines, and shadder o' the trees—
And I purt' nigh said the shadder o' the sunshine and the
breezel!

Well—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea:
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

On the banks o' Deer Crick—mil'd er two from town—
'Long up where the mill-rae comes a-loafin' down,—
Like to git up in there—'mongst the sycamores—
And watch the worter at the dam, a-frothin' as she poups:
Crawl out on some old log, with my hook and line,
Where the fish is jes' so thick you kin see 'em shine
As they flicker round yer bait, coaxin' you to jerk,
Tel yer tired ketchin' of 'em, mighty nigh, as work!

On the banks o' Deer Crick!—Allus my delight
Jes' to be around there—take it day er night!—
Watch the snipes and killdees foolin' half the day—
Er these-'ere little worter-bugs skootin' ever' way!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Snake-feeders glancin' round, er dartin' out o' sight;
And dewfall, and bullfrogs, and lightnin'-bugs at night—
Stars up through the tree-tops—er in the crick below,—
And smell o' mussrat through the dark clean from the old
by-o!

Er take a tromp, some Sund'y, say, 'way up to "Johnson's
Hole,"
And find where he's had a fire, and hid his fishin'-pole:
Have yer "dog-leg" with ye, and yer pipe and "cut-and-
dry"—
Pocketful o' corn-bread, and slug er two o' rye,—
Soak yer hide in sunshine and waller in the shade—
Like the Good Book tells us—"where there're none to make
afraid!"
Well!—I never seen the ocean ner I never seen the sea—
On the banks o' Deer Crick's grand enough fer me!

III *How John Quit the Farm*

NOBODY on the old farm here but Mother, me and
John,
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time come
on—
And *then*, I want to say to you, we *needed* he'p about,
As you'd admit, ef you'd 'a' seen the way the crops turned
out!

A better quarter-section, ner a richer soil warn't found
Than this-here old-home place o' ourn fer fifty miles
around!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The house was small—but plenty-big we found it from the
day

That John—our only livin' son—packed up and went away.

You see, we tuk sich pride in John—his mother more'n
me—

That's natchurul; but *both* of us was proud as proud could
be;

Fer the boy, from a little chap, was most oncommon bright,
And seemed in work as well as play to take the same
delight.

He allus went a-whistlin' round the place, as glad at heart
As robins up at five o'clock to git an airy start;
And many a time 'fore daylight Mother's waked me up
to say—

"Jes' listen, David!—listen!—Johnny's beat the birds to-
day!"

High-sperited from boyhood, with a most inquirin' turn,—
He wanted to learn ever'thing on earth they was to learn:
He'd ast more plaguy questions in a mortal-minute here
Than his grandpap in Paradise could answer in a year!

And *read!* w'y, his own mother learnt him how to read and
spell;

And "The Childern of the Abbey"—w'y, he knowed that
book as well

At fifteen as his parents!—and "The Pilgrim's Progress,"
too—

Jes' knuckled down, the shaver did, and read 'em through
and through!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

At eighteen, Mother 'lawed the boy ~~must~~ have a better
chance—

That we ort to educate him, under any circumstance;
And John he j'ined his mother, and they ding-donged and
kep' on,

Tel I sent him off to school in town, half glad that he was
gone.

But—I missed him—w'y, of course I did!—The Fall and
Winter through

I never built the kitchen-fire, er split a stick in two,
Er fed the stock, er butchered, er swung up a gambrel-
pin,

But what I thought o' John, and wished that he was home
ag'in.

He'd come, sometimes—on Sund'ys most—and stay the
Sund'y out;

And on Thanksgivin'-Day he 'peared to like to be about:
But a change was workin' on him—he was stiller than
before,

And didn't joke, ner laugh, ner sing and whistle any more.

And his talk was all so proper; and I noticed, with a sigh,
He was tryin' to raise side-whiskers, and had on a striped
tie,

And a standin'-collar, ironed up as stiff and slick as bone;
And a breast-pin, and a watch and chain and plug-hat of
his own.

But when Spring-weather opened out, and John was to
come home

And he'p me through the season, I was glad to see him
come;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But my happiness, that evening, with the settin' sun went
down,

When he bragged of "a position" that was offered him in
town.

"But," says I, "you'll not accept it?" "W'y, of course I
will," says he.—

"This drudgin' on a farm," he says, "is not the life fer me;
I've set my stakes up higher," he continued, light and gay.
"And town's the place fer *me*, and I'm a-goin' right away!"

And go he did!—his mother clingin' to him at the gate,
A-pleadin' and a-cryin'; but it hadn't any weight.

I was tranquiller, and told her 'twarn't no use to worry so,
And onclapsed her arms from round his neck round mine—
and let him go!

I felt a little bitter feelin' foolin' round about
The aidges of my conscience; but I didn't let it out;—
I simply retch out, trimbly-like, and tuk the boy's hand,
And though I didn't say a word, I knowed he'd understand.

And—well!—sence then the old home here was mighty
lonesome, shore!

With me a-workin' in the field, and Mother at the door,
Her face ferever to'rds the town, and fadin' more and
more—

Her only son nine miles away, a-clerkin' in a store!

The weeks and months dragged by us; and sometimes the
boy would write

A letter to his mother, sayin' that his work was light,
And not to feel oneasy about his health a bit—

Though his business was confin', he was gittin' used to it.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And sometimes he would write and ast how *I* was gittin'
on,

And ef I had to pay out much fer he'p sence he was gone;
And how the hogs was doin', and the balance of the stock,
And talk on fer a page er two jes' like he used to talk.

And he wrote, along 'fore harvest, that he guessed he
would git home,

Fer business would, of course, be dull in town.—But he
didn't come:—

We got a postal later, sayin' when they had no trade
They filled the time "invoicin' goods," and that was why he
stayed.

And then he quit a-writin' altogether: Not a word—
Exceptin' what the neighbors brung who'd been to town
and heard

What store John was clerkin' in, and went round to inquire
If they could buy their goods there less and sell their
produce higher.

And so the Summer faded out, and Autumn wore away,
And a keener Winter never fetched around Thanksgivin'-
Day!

The night before that day of thanks I'll never quite fergit,
The wind a-howlin' round the house—it makes me creepy
yit!

And there set me and Mother—me a-twistin' at the prongs
Of a green scrub-ellum forestick with a vicious pair of
tongs,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Mother sayin', "*David! David!*" in a' undertone,
As though she thought that I was thinkin' bad-words
unbeknown.

"I've dressed the turkey, David, fer to-morrow," Mother
said,
A-tryin' to wedge some pleasant subject in my stubborn
head,—
"And the mince-meat I'm a-mixin' is perfection mighty
nigh;
And the pound-cake is delicious-rich—" "Who'll eat 'em?"
I-says-I.

"The cranberries is drippin'-sweet," says Mother, runnin'
on,
P'tendin' not to hear me;—"and somehow I thought of
John
All the time they was a-jellin'—fer you know they allus
was
His favorite—he likes 'em so!" Says I, "Well s'pose he
does?"

"Oh, nothin' much!" says Mother, with a quiet sort o'
smile—
"This gentleman behind my cheer may tell you after
while!"
And as I turned and looked around, some one riz up and
leant
And putt his arms round Mother's neck, and laughed in low
content.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"It's *me*," he says—"your fool-boy John, come back to
shake your hand;

Set down with you, and talk with you, and make you
understand

How dearer yit than all the world is this old home that we
Will spend Thanksgivin' in fer life—jes' Mother, you and
me!"

Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John,
Except, of course, the extry he'p when harvest-time comes
on;

And then, I want to say to you, we *need* sich he'p about,
As you'd admit, ef you could see the way the crops turns
out!

112

His Mother's Way

TOMPS 'ud allus haf to say
Somepin' 'bout "his mother's way."—

He lived hard-like—never j'ined
Any church of any kind.—

"It was Mother's way," says he,

"To be good enough fer *me*

And her too,—and cert'inly.

Lord has heerd *her* pray!"

Propped up on his dyin' bed,—

"Shore as Heaven's overhead,

I'm a-goin' there," he said—

"It was Mother's way."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

113

Jap Miller

JAP MILLER down at Martinsville's the blamedest
feller yit!

When *he* starts in a-talkin' other folks is apt to quit!—
'Pears like that mouth o' his'n wuzn't made fer nothin' else
But jes' to argify 'em down and gether in their pelts;
He'll talk you down on tariff; er he'll talk you down on
tax,

And prove the pore man pays 'em all—and them's about the
fac's!—

Religen, law, er politics, prize-fightin', er baseball—
Jes' tetch Jap up a little and he'll post you 'bout 'em all.

And the comicalet feller ever tilted back a cheer
And tuk a chaw tobacker kind o' like he didn't keer.—
There's where the feller's stren'th lays,—he's so common-
like and plain,—

They hain't no dude about old Jap, you bet you—nary
grain!

They 'lected him to Council and it never turned his head,
And didn't make no differunce what anybody said,—
He didn't dress no finer, ner rag out in fancy clothes;
But his voice in Council-meetin's is a turrer to his foes.

He's fer the pore man ever' time! And in the last cam-
paign

He stumped old Morgan County, through the sunshine and
the rain,

And helt the banner up'ards from a-trailin' in the dust
And cut loose on monopolies and cuss'd and cuss'd and
cuss'd!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He'd tell some funny story ever' now and then, you know,
Tel, blame it! it wuz better'n a jack-o'-lantern show!
And I'd go funder, yit, to-day, to hear old Jap norate
Than any high-toned orator 'at ever stumped the State!

W'y, that-air blame Jap Miller, with his keen sircastic fun,
Has got more friends than ary candidate 'at ever run!
Don't matter what *his* views is, when he states the same
to you,
They allus coincide with yourn, the same as two and two:
You *can't* take issue with him—er, 'at least, they hain't no
sense
In startin' in to down him, so you better not commence.—
The best way's jes' to listen, like your humble servant does,
And jes' concede Jap Miller is the best man ever wuz!

114

Jack the Giant Killer

BAD BOY'S VERSION

TELL you a story—an' it's a fac':—
Wunst wuz a little boy, name wuz Jack,
An' he had a sword an' buckle an' strap
Maked of gold, an' a "'visibul cap";
An' he killed Gi'nts 'at et whole cows—
Th' horns an' all—an' pigs an' sows!
But Jack, his golding sword wuz, oh!
So awful sharp 'at he could go

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' cut th' ole Gi'nts clean in too
'Fore 'ey knowed what he wuz goin' to do!
An' *one* ole Gi'nt, he had four
Heads, and name wuz "Bumblebore"—
An' he wuz feared o' Jack—'cause he,
Jack, he killed six—five—ten—three,
An' all o' th' uther ole Gi'nts but him:
An' thay wuz a place Jack haf to swim
'Fore he could git t' ole "Bumblebore"—
Nen thay wuz "griffuns" at the door:
But Jack, he thist plunged in an' swum
Clean acrost; an' when he come
To th' uther side, he thist put on
His "'visibul cap," an' nen, dog-gone!
You couldn't see him at all!—An' so
He slewed the "griffuns"—*boff*, you know!
Nen wuz a horn hunged over his head,
High on th' wall, an' words 'at read,—
"Whoever kin this trumput blow
Shall cause the Gi'nt's overth'ow!"
An' Jack, he thist reached up an' blowed
The stuffin' out of it! an' th'owed
Th' castul-gates wide open, an'
Nen tuk his gold sword in his han',
An' thist marched in t' ole "Bumblebore,"
An', 'fore he knowed, he put 'bout four
Heads on him—an' chopped 'em off, too!—
Wisht 'at I'd been Jack!—don't you?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

115 *Farmer Whipple.—Bachelor*

IT'S a mystery to see me—a man o' fifty-four,
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and
more—

A-lookin' glad and smilin'! And they's none o' you can say
That you can guess the reason why I feel so good to-day!

I must tell you all about it! But I'll have to deviate
A little in beginnin' so's to set the matter straight
As to how it comes to happen that I never took a wife—
Kind o' "crawfish" from the Present to the Spring-time of
my life!

I was brought up in the country: Of a family of five—
Three brothers and a sister—I'm the only one alive,—
Fer they all died little babies; and 'twas one o' Mother's
ways,

You know, to want a daughter; so she took a girl to raise.

The sweetest little thing she was, with rosy cheeks, and
fat—

We was little chunks o' shavers then about as high as that!
But some way we sort o' suited-like! and Mother she'd
declare

She never laid her eyes on a more lovin' pair

Than *we* was! So we growed up side by side fer thirteen
year',

And every hour of it she growed to me more dear!—

THE HOOSTER BOOK

W'y, even Father's dyin', as he did, I do believe
Warn't more affectin' to me than it was to see 'her grieve!

I was then a lad o' twenty; and I felt a flash o' pride
In thinkin' all depended on *me* now to pervide
Fer Mother and fer Mary; and I went about the place
With sleeves rolled up—and workin', with a mighty smilin'
face.—

~~Fer sompin' else~~ was workin'! but not a word I said
Of a certain sort o' notion that was runnin' through my
head,—
“Some day I'd maybe marry, and a *brother's* love was one
Thing—a *lover's* was another!” was the way the notion
run!

I remember onc't in harvest, when the “cradle-in” was
done—

(When the harvest of my summers mounted up to twenty-
one),

I was ridin' home with Mary at the closin' o' the day—
A-chawin' straws and thinkin', in a lover's lazy way!

And Mary's cheeks was burnin' like the sunset down the
lane:

I noticed she was thinkin', too, and ast her to explain.
Well—when she turned and *kissed* me, with *her arms*
around me—law!

I'd a bigger load o' Heaven than I had a load o' straw!

I don't p'tend to learnin', but I'll tell you what's a fac',
They's a mighty truthful sayin' somers in a almanac—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er *somers*—'bout "puore happiness"—perhaps some folks'll
laugh

At the idy—"only lastin' jest two seconds and a half."—

But it's jest as true as preachin'!—fer that was a *sister's*
kiss,

And a sister's lovin' confidence a-tellin' to me this:—

"*She* was happy, *bein' promised to the son o' farmer*
Brown."—

And my feelin's struck a pardnership with sunset and went
down!

I don't know *how* I acted, I don't know *what* I said,—

Fer my heart seemed jest a-turnin' to an ice-cold lump o'
lead;

And the hosses kind o' glimmered before me in the road,

And the lines fell from my fingers—And that was all I
knowed—

Fer—well, I don't know *how* long—They's a dim remem-
berence

Of a sound o' snortin' hosses, and a stake-and-ridered fence

A-whizzin' past, and wheat-sheaves a-dancin' in the air,

And Mary screamin' "Murder!" and a-runnin' up to where

I was layin' by the roadside, and the wagon upside down

A-leanin' on the gate-post, with the wheels a-whirlin'
round!

And I tried to raise and meet her, but I couldn't, with a
vague

Sort o' notion comin' to me that I had a broken leg.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well, the women nussed me through it; but many a time
I'd sigh

As I'd keep a-gittin' better instid o' goin' to die,
And wonder what was left *me* worth livin' fer below,
When the girl I loved was married to another, don't you
know!

And my thoughts was as rebellious as the folks was good
and kind

When Brown and Mary married—Railly must 'a' been my
mind

Was kind o' out o' kilter!—fer I hated Brown, you see,
Worse'n *pizen*—and the feller whittled crutches out fer
me—

And done a thousand little ac's o' kindness and respec'—
And me a-wishin' all the time that I could break his neck!
My relief was like a mourner's when the funeral is done
When they moved to Illinois in the Fall o' Forty-one.

Then I went to work in airnest—I had nothin' much in
view

But to drownd out rickollections—and it kep' me busy, too!
But I slowly thrived and prospered, tel Mother used to
say

She expected yit to see me a wealthy man some day.

Then I'd think how little *money* was, compared to happi-
ness—

And who'd be left to use it when I died I couldn't guess!
But I've still kep' speculatin' and a-gainin' year by year,
Tel I'm payin' half the taxes in the county; mighty near!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well!—A year ago er better, a letter comes to hand
Astin' how I'd like to dicker fer some Illinois land—
"The feller that had owned it," it went ahead to state,
"Had jest deceased, insolvent, leavin' chance to speculate,"—

And then it closed by sayin' that I'd "better come and see."—

I'd never been West, anyhow—a'most too wild fer *me*,
I'd allus had a notion; but a lawyer here in town
Said I'd find myself mistakend when I come to look around.

So I bids good-by to Mother, and I jumps aboard the train,

A-thinkin' what I'd bring her when I come back home again—

And ef she'd had an idy what the present was to be,
I think it's more'n likely she'd 'a' went along with me!

Cars is awful tejus ridin', fer all they go so fast!
But finally they called out my stoppin'-place at last:
And that night, at the tavern, I dreamt' I was a train
O' cars, and *skeered* at somepin', runnin' down a country lane!

Well, in the mornin' airy—after huntin' up the man—
The lawyer who was wantin' to swap the piece o' land—
We started fer the country; and I ast the history
Of the farm—its former owner—and so forth, etcetery!

And—well—it was interesfin'—I su'prised him, I suppose
By the loud and frequent manner in which I blowed my nose!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But his su'prise was greater, and it made him wonder more,
When I kissed and hugged the widdie when she met us at
the door!—

It was Mary: . . . They's a feelin' a-hidin' down in
here—

Of course I can't explain it, ner ever make it clear—
It was with us in that meetin', I don't want you to fergit!
And it makes me kind o' nervous when I think about it yit!

I *bought* that farm, and *deeded* it, afore I left the town,
With "title clear to mansions in the skies," to *Mary Brown*!
And fu'thermore, I took her and the *childern*—fer you see,
They'd never seed their Grandma—and I fetched 'em home
with me.

So *now* you've got an idy why a man o' fifty-four,
Who's lived a cross old bachelor fer thirty year' and more,
Is a-lookin' glad and smilin'!—And I've jest come into
town

To git a pair o' license fer to *marry Mary Brown*.

116 *Down, Noon and Dewfall*

DAWN, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin
Up and at it airly, and the orchard-blossoms bobbin'!
Peekin' from the winder, half awake, and wishin'
I could go to sleep ag'in as well as go a-fishin'!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

II

On the aporn o' the dam, legs a-danglin' over,
Drowsy-like with sound o' worter and the smell o' clover:
Fish all out a-visitin'—'cept some dratted minnor!
Yes, and mill shet down at last and hands is gone to
dinner.

III

Trompin' home acrost the fields: Lightnin'-bugs a-blinkin'
In the wheat like sparks o' things feller keeps a-thinkin':—
Mother waitin' supper, and the childern there to cherr me!
And fiddle on the kitchen-wall a-jes' a-eechin' fer me!

117. *As My Uncle Used to Say*

I 'VE thought a power on men and things—
As my uncle ust to say,—
And ef folks don't work as they pray, i jings!
W'y, they ain't no use to pray!
Ef you want somepin', and jes' dead-set
A-pleadin' fer it with both eyes wet,
And *tears* won't bring it, w'y, you try *sweat*
As my uncle ust to say.

They's some don't know their A, B, C's—
As my uncle ust to say—
And yit don't waste no candle-grease,
Ner whistle their lives away!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But ef they can't write no book, ner rhyme
No ringin' song fer to last all time,
They can blaze the way fer "the march sublime,"
As my uncle ust to say.

Whoever's Foreman of all things here,
As my uncle ust to say,
He knows each job 'at we're best fit fer,
And our round-up, night and day:
And a-sizin' *His* work, east and west,
And north and south, and worst and best,
I ain't got nothin' to suggest,
As my uncle ust to say.

118

A Full Harvest

SEEMS like a feller'd ort'o jes' to-day
Git down and roll and waller, don't you know,
In that-air stubble, and flop up and crow,
Seein' sich crops! I'll undertake to say
There're no wheat's ever turned out thataway
Afore this season!—Folks is keerless, though,
And too fergitful—'caze we'd ort'o show
More thankfulness!—Jes' looky hyonder, hey?—
And watch that little reaper wadin' thue
That last old yaller hunk o' harvest-ground—
Jes' natchur'ly a-slicin' it in two
Like honeycomb, and gaumin' it around
The field—like it had nothin' else to do
On'y jes' waste it all on me and you!

RIGHT here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom,
 Where strangers allus joke us when they come,
 And brag o' *their* old States and interprize—
 Yit *settle* here; and 'fore they realize,
 They're "hoosier" as the rest of us, and five
 Right here at home, boys, with their past fergive'!

Right here at home, boys, is the place, I guess,
 Fer me and you and plain old happiness:
 We hear the World's lots grander—likely so,—
 We'll take the World's word fer it and not go.—
 We know *its* ways ain't *our* ways—so we'll stay
 Right here at home, boys, where we *know* the way.

Right here at home, boys, where a well-to-do
 Man's plenty rich enough—and knows it, too,
 And's got a' extry dollar, any time,
 To boost a feller up 'at *wants* to climb
 And's got the git-up in him to go in
 And *git there*, like he purt' nigh allus kin!

Right here at home, boys, is the place fer us!—
 Where folks' heart's bigger'n their money-pu's';
 And where a *common* feller's jes' as good
 As any other in the neighborhood:
 The World at large don't worry you and me
 Right here at home, boys, where we ort to be!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Right here at home, boys—jes' right where we air!—
Birds don't sing any sweeter anywhere:
Grass don't grow any greener'n she grows
Across the pastur' where the old path goes,—
All things in ear-shot's purty, er in sight,
Right here at home, boys, ef we *size* 'em right.

Right here at home, boys, where the old home-place
Is sacred to us as our mother's face,
Jes' as we rickollect her, last she smiled
And kissed us—dyin' so and rickonciled,
Seein' us all at home here—none astray—
Right here at home, boys, where she sleeps to-day.

120 *Sister Jones's Confession*

I THOUGHT the deacon liked me, yit
I warn't adzackly shore of it—
Fer, mind ye, time and time ag'in,
When jiners 'ud be comin' in,
I'd seed him shakin' hands as free
With all the sistern as with me!
But jurin' last Revival, where
He called on *me* to lead in prayer,
An' kneeled there with me, side by side,
A-whisper'n' "he felt sanctified
Jes' tetchin' of my gyarment's hem,"—
That settled things as fur as them—
Thare *other* wimmin was concerned!—
And—well!—I know I must 'a' turned

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A dozen colors!—*Flurried?*—*la!*—
No mortal sinner never saw
A gladder widder than the one
A-kneelin' there and wonderun'
Who'd pray!—So glad, upon my word,
I raily couldn't thank the Lord!

121

Iry and Billy and Jo

A TINTYPE

I RY an' Billy an' Jo!—
Iry an' Billy's *the boys*,
An' Jo's their *dog*, you know,—
Their pictur's took all in a row.
Bet they kin kick up a noise—
Iry and Billy, the boys,
And that-air little dog Jo!

Iry's the one 'at stands
Up there a-lookin' so mild
An' meek—with his hat in his hands,
Like such a '*bediant* child—
(*Sakes-alive!*)—An' Billy he sets
In the cheer an' holds on to Jo an' *sweats*
Hisse'f, a-lookin' so good! Ho-ho!
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

Yit the way them boys, you know,
Usen to jes' turn in
An' fight over that dog Jo
Wuz a burnin'-shame-an'-a-sin!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Iry *he'd* argy 'at, by gee-whizz!
That-air little Jo-dog wuz *his!*—
An' Billy *he'd* claim it wuzn't so—
'Cause the dog wuz *hisn!*—An' at it they'd go,
Nip-an'-tugg, tooth-an'-toe-nail, you know—
Iry an' Billy an' Jo!

But their Pa—(He wuz the marshal then)—
He 'tended-like 'at he *jerked 'em up;*
An' got a jury o' Brick-yard men
An' helt *a trial* about the pup:
An' *he* says *he* jes' like to 'a' died
When the rest o' us town-boys *testified*—
Regardin', you know,
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.—

'Cause we all knowed, when *the Gipsies* they
Camped down here by the crick last Fall,
They brung Jo with 'em, an' give him away
To Iry an' Billy fer nothin' at all!—
So the jury fetched in the *verdict* so
Jo he ain't *neether* o' theirn fer *shore*—
He's *both* their dog, an' jes' no more!
An' so
They've quit quarrelin' long ago,
Iry an' Billy an' Jo.

TAKE a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf,
 All shaky, and ga'nted, and pore—
 Jes' all so knocked out he can't handle hisself
 With a stiff upper-lip any more;
 Shet him up all alone in the gloom of a room
 As dark as the tomb, and as grim,
 And then take and send him some roses in bloom,
 And you can have fun out o' him!

You've ketched him 'fore now—when his liver
 was sound

And his appetite notched like a saw—
 A-mockin' you, maybe, fer romancin' round
 With a big posy-bunch in yer paw;
 But you ketch him, say, when his health is away,
 And he's flat on his back in distress,
 And *then* you kin trot out yer little bokay
 And not be insulted, I guess!

You see, it's like this, what his weakness is,—
 Them flowers makes him think of the days
 Of his innocent youth, and that mother o' his,
 And the roses that *she* us't to raise:—
 So here, all alone with the roses you send—
 Bein' sick and all trimbly and faint,—
 My eyes is—my eyes is—my eyes is—old friend—
 Is a-leakin'—I'm blamed ef they ain't!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

123

By Any Other Name

FIRST the teacher called the roll,
Clos't to the beginnin',
"Addeliney Bowersox!"

Set the school a-grinnin'.
Winter-time, and stingin' cold
When the session took up—
Cold as *we* all looked at *her*,
Though *she* couldn't look up!

Total stranger to us, too—
Country folks ain't allus
Nigh so shameful unpolite
As some people call us!—
But the honest facts is, *then*,
Addeliney Bower-
Sox's feelin's was so hurt
She cried half an hour!

My dest was acrost from hern:
Set and watched her tryin'
To p'tend she didn't keer,
And a kind o' dryin'
Up her tears with smiles—tel I
Thought, "Well, '*Addeliney*
Bowersox' is plain, but *she's*
Purty as a piney!"

It's be'n many of a year
Sence that most oncommon
Cur'ous name o' *Bowersox*
Struck me so abomin-

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nubble and outlandish-like!—

I changed it to Adde-

Liney *Daubenspeck*—and *that*

Nearly killed her Daddy!

124

The Hoodoo

OWNED a pair o' skates onc't.—Traded
Fer 'em,—stropped 'em on and waded
Up and down the crick, a-waitin'
Tel she'd freeze up fit fer skatin'.
Mildest winter I remember—

More like Spring- than Winter-weather!—
Didn't *frost* tel 'bout December—
Git up airly ketch a feather
Of it, mayby, 'crost the winder—
Sunshine swinge it like a cinder!

Well—I *waited*—and *kep'* waitin'!

Couldn't see my money's wo'th in
Them-air skates, and was no skatin'

Ner no hint o' ice ner nothin'!
So, one day—along in airly
Spring—I swopped 'em off—and barely
Closed the dicker, 'fore the weather

Natchurly jes' slipped the ratchet,
And crick—tail-race—all together,

Froze so tight cat couldn't scratch it!

125 *What Chris'mas Fetched the
Wigginses*

WINTER-TIME, er Summer-time,
 Of late years I notice I'm
 Kind o' like, more subjec' to
 What the *weather* is. Now, *you*
 Folks 'at lives in town, I s'pose,
 Thinks it's bully when it snows;
 But the chap 'at chops and hauls
 Yet wood fer ye, and then stalls,
 And snaps tuggs and swingletrees,
 And then has to walk er freeze,
 Hain't so much "stuck on" the snow
 As stuck in it—Bless ye, no!—
 When it's packed, and sleighin' 's good,
 And *church* in the neighborhood,
 Them 'at's *got* their girls, I guess,
 Takes 'em, likely, more er less.
 Tell the plain facts o' the case,
 No men-folks about our place
 On'y me and Pap—and he
 'Lows 'at young folks' company
 Allus made him sick! So I
 Jes' don't want, and jes' don't try!
 Chinkypin, the dad-burn town,
 'S too fur off to loaf aroun'
 Eether day er night—and no
 Law compellin' me to go!—
 'Less'n some Old-Settlers' Day,
 Er big-doin's thataway—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then, to tell the p'inted fac',
I've went more so's to come back
By old Guthrie's still-house, where
Minors *has* got licker there—
That's pervidin' we could show 'em;
Old folks sent fer it from home!
Visit roun' the neighbors some,
When the *boys* wants me to come.—
Coon-hunt with 'em; er set traps
Fer mussrats; er jes' perhaps,
Lay in roun' the stove, you know,
And parch corn, and let her snow!
Mostly, nights like these, you'll be
(Ef you' got a writ fer *me*)
Ap' to skeer me up, I guess,
In about the Wigginses'.
Nothin' roun' *our* place to keep
Me at home—with Pap asleep
'Fore it's dark; and Mother in
Mango pickles to her chin;
And the girls, all still as death,
Piecin' quilts.—Sence I drewed breath
Twenty year' ago, and heerd
Some girls whisper'n' so's it 'peared
Like they had a row o' pins
In their mouth—right there begins
My first rickollections, built
On that-air blame' old piece-quilt!

Summer-time, it's jes' the same—
'Cause I've noticed,—and I claim,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

As I said afore, I'm more
Subjec' to the weather, *shore*,
'Proaching my majority,
Than I ever ust to be!
Callin' back *last* Summer, say,—
Don't seem hardly past away—
With night closin' in, and all
S' lonesome-like in the dewfall:
Bats—ad-drat their ugly muggs!—
Flicker'n' by; and lightnin'-bugs
Huckster'n' roun' the airy night
Little sickly gasps o' light;—
Whippoorwills, like all possess'd,
Moanin' out their mournfullest;—
Frogs and katydids and things
Jes' *clubs* in and sings and sings
Their *ding-dangdest*!—Stock's all fed,
And Pap's washed his feet fer bed;—
Mother and the girls all down
At the milk-shed, foolin' roun'—
No wunder 'at I git blue,
And lite out—and so would you!
I cain't stay aroun' no place
Whur they hain't no livin' face:—
'Crost the fields and thue the gaps
Of the hills they's friends, perhaps,
Waitin' somers, 'at kin be
Kind o' comfertin' to me!

Neighbors all is plenty good,
Scattered thue this neighborhood;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yit, of all, I like to jes'
Drap in on the Wigginses.—
Old man, and old lady too,
'Pear-like, makes so much o' you—
Least, they've allus pampered me
Like one of the fambily.—
The boys, too, 's all thataway—
Want you jes' to come and stay;—
Price, and Chape, and Mandaville,
Poke, Chasteen, and "Catfish Bill"—
Poke's the runt of all the rest,
But he's jes' the beatin'est
Little schemer, fer fourteen,
Anybody ever seen!—
"Like his namesake," old man claims,
"Jeems K. Poke, the first o' names!
'Full o' tricks and jokes—and you
Never know what *Poke's* go' do!"
Genius, too, that-air boy is,
With them awk'ard hands o' his:
Gits this blame pokeberry-juice,
Er some stuff, fer ink—and goose-
Quill pen-p'int's: And then he'll draw
Dogdest pictures yevver saw!—
Jes' make deers and eagles good
As a writin' teacher could!
Then they's two twin boys they've riz
Of old Coonrod Wigginses
'At's deceast—and glad of it,
'Cause his widder's livin' yit!
Course *the boys* is mostly jes'
Why I go to Wigginses'.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Though *Melviney*, sometimes, *she*
Gits her slate and algebray
And jes' sets there cipher'n' thue
Sums old Ray hisse'f cain't do!—
Jes' sets there, and tilts her chair
Forreds tel, 'pear-like, her hair
Jes' *spills* in her lap—and then
She jes' dips it up again
With her hands, as white, I swan,
As the apern she's got on!

Talk o' hospitality!—
Go to Wigginses' with me—
Overhet, or froze plum thue,
You'll find welcome waitin' you:—
Th'ow out yer tobacker 'fore
You set foot acrost that floor,—
"Got to eat whatever's set—
Got to drink whatever's wet!"
Old man's sentimuns—them's his—
And means jes' the best they is!
Then he lights his pipe; and she,
The old lady, presen'ly
She lights hern; and Chape and Poke.—
I hain't got none, ner don't smoke,—
(In the crick afore their door—
Sort o' so's 'at I'd be shore—
Drownded mine one night and says
"I won't smoke at *Wigginses'*!")
Price he's mostly talkin' 'bout
Politics, and "thieves turned out"—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

What he's go' to be, ef he
Ever "gits there"—and "we'll see!"—
Poke he 'lows they's blame' few men
Go' to hold their breath tel then!
Then Melviney smiles, as she
Goes on with her algebry,
And the clouds clear, and the room's
Sweeter'n crabapple-blooms!
(That Melviney, she's got some
Most surprisin' ways, i gum!—
Don't 'pear-like she ever *says*
Nothin', yit you'll *listen* jes'
Like she *was* a-talkin', and
Half-way seem to understand,
But not quite,—*Poke* does, I know,
'Cause he good as told me so,—
Poke's her favo-rite; and he—
That is, confidentially—
He's *my* favo-rite—and I
Got my whurfore and my why!)

I hain't never be'n no hand
Much at talkin'; understand,
But they's *thoughts* o' mine 'at's jes'
Jealous o' them Wigginses!—
Gift o' talkin' 's what they' got,
Whuther they want to er not.—
F'r instunce, start the old man on
Huntin'-scrapes, 'fore game was gone,
'Way back in the Forties, when
Bears stold pigs right out the pen,

THE 'HOOSIER' BOOK

Er went waltzin' 'crost the farm
With a beehive on their arm!—
And—sir, *ping!* the old man's gun
Has plumped over many a one,
Firin' at him from afore
That-air very cabin-door!
Yes—and *painters*, prowlin' 'bout,
Allus darkest nights.—Lay out
Clost yer cattle.—Great, big red
Eyes a-blazin' in their head,
Glitter'n' 'long the timber-line—
Shine out some, and then *un-shine*,
And shine back.—Then, stiddy! *whizz!*
'N' there yer Mr. Painter is
With a hole bored spang between
Them-air eyes! . . . Er start Chasteen,
Say, on blooded racin'-stock,
Ef you want to hear him talk;
Er tobacker—how to raise,
Store, and k-yore it, so's she pays. . . .
The old lady—and she'll cote
Scriptur' tel she'll git yer vote!
Prove to you 'at wrong is right,
Jes' as plain as black is white:
Prove when you're asleep in bed
You're a-standin' on yer head,
And yer train 'at's going West,
'S goin' East its level best;
And when bees dies, it's their wings
Wears out—And a thousand things!
—And the boys is "chips," you know,
"Off the old block"—So I go

THE HOOSIER BOOK

To the Wigginses', 'cause—jes'
'Cause I *like* the Wigginses—
Even ef Melviney *she*
Hardly 'pears to notice me!

Rid to Chinkypin this week—
Yisterd'y.—No snow to speak
Of, and didn't have no sleigh
Anyhow; so, as I say,
I rid in—and froze one ear
And both heels—and I don't keer!—
"Mother and the girls kin jes'
Bother 'bout their Chris'mases
Next time fer *theirse'v's*, i jack!"
Thinks-says-I, a-startin' back,—
Whole durn meal-bag full of things
Wropped in paper-sacks, and strings
Liable to snap their holt
Jes' at any little jolt!
That in front o' me, and *wind*
With *nicks* in it, 'at jes' skinned
Me alive!—I'm here to say
Nine mile' hossback thataway
Would 'a' walked my log! But, as
Somepin' allus comes to pass,
As I topped old Guthrie's hill,
Saw a buggy, front the Still,
P'inted home'ards, and a thin
Little chap jes' climbin' in.
Six more minutes I were there
On the groun's!—And course it were—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

It were little Poke—and he
Nearly fainted to see me!—
“You be’n in to Chinky, too?”
“Yes; and go’ ride back with you,”
I-says-I. He he’pped me find
Room fer my things in behind—
Stript my hoss’s reins down, and
Putt his mitt’ on the right hand
So’s to lead—“Pile in!” says he,
“But you’ve struck pore company!”
Noticed he was pale—looked sick,
Kind o’ like, and had a quick
Way o’ flickin’ them-air eyes
O’ his roun’ ’at didn’t size
Up right with his usual style—
S’ I, “You *well?*” He tried to smile,
But his chin shuck and tears come.—
“I’ve run ’Viney ’way from home!”

Don’t know jes’ what all occurred
Next ten seconds—Nary word,
But my heart jes’ drapt, stobbed thue,
And whirlt over and come to.—
Wrenched a big quart-bottle from
That fool-böy!—and cut my thumb
On his little fiste-teeth—helt
Him snug in one arm, and felt
That-air little heart o’ his
Churn the blood o’ Wigginses
Into that old bead ’at spun
Roun’ her, spilt at Lexington!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

His k'nptions, like enough,
He'pped us both,—though it was rough—
Rough on him, and rougher on
Me when last his nerve was gone,
And he laid there still, his face
Fishin' fer some hidin'-place
Jes' a leetle lower down
In my breast than he'd yit foun'!
Last I kind o' soothed him, so's
He could talk.—And what you s'pose
Them-air revelations of
Poke's was? . . . He'd be'n writin' love-
Letters to Melviney, and
Givin' her to understand
They was from "a young man who
Loved her," and—"the violet's blue
'N' sugar's sweet"—and Lord knows what!
Tel, 'peared-like, Melviney got
S' interested in "the young
Man," Poke *he* says, 'at she brung
A' answer onc't fer him to take,
Statin' "she'd die fer his sake,"
And writ fifty *x's* "fer
Love-kisses fer him from her!" . . .
I was standin' in the road
By the buggy, all I knowed
When Poke got that fur.—"That's why,"
Poke says, "I 'fessed up the lie—
Had to—'cause I see," says he,
"'Viney was in *airnest*—she
Cried, too, when I told her.—Then
She swore me, and smiled again,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And got Pap and Mother to
Let me hitch and drive her thue
Into Chinkypin, to be
At Aunt 'Rindy's Chris'mas-tree—
That's to-night." Says I, "Poke—durn
Your lyin' soul!—'s that beau o' hern—
That—*she*—loves—Does *he* live in
That hellhole o' Chinkypin?"
"No," says Poke, "er 'Viney would
Went some *other* neighborhood."
"Who *is* the blame' whelp?" says I.
"Promised 'Viney, hope I'd die
Ef I ever told!" says Poke,
Pittiful and jes' heart-broke'—
"'Sides that's why she left the place,—
'She cain't look him in the face
Now no more on earth!' she says."—
And the child broke down and jes'
Sobbed! . . . Says I, "Poke, I p'tend
T' be *your* friend, and your Pap's friend,
And your *Mother's* friend, and all
The *boys'* friend, little, large and small—
The *whole fambily's* friend—and you
Know that means *Melviney*, too.—
Now—you hursh yer troublin'!—I'm
Go' to he'p friends ever' time—
On'y in *this* case, *you* got
To he'p *me*—and, like as not,
I kin he'p *Melviney* then,
And we'll have her home again.
And now, Poke, with your consent,
I'm go' go to that-air gent

THE HOOSIER BOOK

She's in love with, and confer
With *him* on his views o' *her*.—
Blast him! give the man *some* show.—
Who *is* he?—*I'm go' to know!*"
Somepin' struck the little chap
Funny, 'peared-like.—Give a slap
On his leg—laughed thue the dew
In his eyes, and says: "*It's you!*"

Yes, and—'cordin' to the last
Love-letters of ours 'at passed
Thue his hands—we was to be
Married Chris'mas.—"*Gee-mun-nee!*
Poke," says I, "*it's suddent—yit*
We *kin* make it! You're to git
Up to-morry, say, 'bout *three*—
Tell your folks you're go' with me:—
We'll hitch up, and jes' drive in
'N' *take* the town o' Chinkypin!"

126 *Old Winters on the Farm*

I HAVE jest about decided
It 'ud keep a *town-boy* hoppin'
Fer to work all winter, choppin'
Fer a' old fireplace, like *I* did!
Lawz! them old times wuz contrairy!—
Blame' backbone o' winter, 'peared-like
Wouldn't break!—and I wuz skeerd-like
Clean on into *Feb'uary!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nothin' ever made me madder
Than fer Pap to stomp in, layin'
On a' extra fore-stick, sayin'
"Groun'-hog's out and seed his shadder!"

127

The Twins

ONE'S the pictur' of his Pa,
And the *other* of her Ma—
Jes' the boss'est pair o' babies 'at a mortal
ever saw!

And we love 'em as the bees
Loves the blossoms on the trees,
A-ridin' and a-rompin' in the breeze!

One's got her Mammy's eyes—
Soft and blue as Apurl-skies—
With the same sort of a *smile*, like—Yes, and
mouth about her size,—
Dimples, too, in cheek and chin,
'At my lips jes' *wallers* in,
A-goin' to work, er gittin' home ag'in.

And the *other*—Well, they say
That he's got his Daddy's way
O' bein' ruther soberfied, er ruther *extry* gay,—
That he either cries his best,
Er he laughs his howlin'est—
Like all he lacked was buttons and a vest!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Look at *her!*—and look at *him!*—
Talk about yer “Cheru-*him!*”
Roll ’em up in dreams together, rosy arm and
chubby limb!
O we love ’em as the bees
Loves the blossoms on the trees,
A-ridin’ and a-rompin’ in the breeze!

128

John Alden and Percilly

WE got up a Christmas-doin’s
Las’ Christmas Eve—

Kind o’ dimonstration
’At I raily believe
Give more satisfaction—
Take it up and down—
Than ary intertainment
Ever come to town!

Railly was a *theater*—
That’s what it was,—
But, bein’ in the church, you know,
We had a “*Santy Claus*”—
So’s to git the *old folks*
To patternize, you see,
And *back* the institootion up
Kind o’ *morally*.

School-teacher writ the thing—
(Was a friend o’ mine)
Got it out o’ Longfeller’s
Pome “*Evangeline*”—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er somers—'bout the *Purituns*.—

Anyway, the part

"*John Alden*" fell to me—

And learnt it all by heart!

Claircy was "*Percilly*"—

(School-teacher 'lowed

Me and her could act them two

Best of all the crowd)—

Then—blame' ef he didn't

Git her Pap, i jing!—

To take the part o' "*Santy Claus*,"

To wind up the thing.

Law! the fun o' practisun!—

Was a week er two

Me and Claircy didn't have

Nothin' else to do!—

Kep' us jes' a-meetin' round,

Kind o' here and there,

Ever' night rehearsin'-like,

And gaddin' ever'where!

Game was wo'th the candle, though!—

Christmas Eve at last

Rolled around.—And 'tendance jes'

Couldn't been su'passed!—

Neighbors from the country

Come from Clay and Rush—

Yes, and 'crost the county-line

Clean from Puckerbrush!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Meetin'-house jes' trimbled
As "Old Santy" went
Round amongst the childern,
With their peppermint
And sassafrac and wintergreen
Candy, and "a ball
O' popcorn," the preacher 'nounced,
"Free fer each and all!"

School-teacher suddently
Whispered in my ear,—
"Guess I got you:—*Christmas-gift!*—
Christmas is here!"
I give him a gold pen,
And case to hold the thing.—
And *Claircy* whispered "*Christmas-gift!*"
And I give her a *ring*.

"And now," says I, "jes' watch *me*—
"Christmas-gift," says I,
"*I'm* a-goin' to git one—
'*Santy's*' comin' by!"—
Then I rech and grabbed him:
And, as you'll infer,
'Course I got the old man's,
And *he* gimme *her*!

129 *Some Scattering Remarks of
Bub's*

WUNST I tooked our pepper-box lid
An' cut little pie-dough biscuits, I did,
An' cooked 'em on our stove one day
When our hired girl she said I may.

Honey's the goodest thing—Oo-ooh!
And blackburry-pies is goodest, too!
But wite hot biscuits, ist soakin'-wet
Wiv tree-mulassus, is goodest yet!

Miss Maimie she's my Ma's friend,—an'
She's purtiest girl in all the lan'!—
An' sweetest smile an' voice an' face—
An' eyes ist looks like p'serves tas'e'!

I *ruther* go to the Circus-show;
But, 'cause my *parunts* told me so,
I ruther go to the Sund'y-school,
'Cause there I learn the goldun rule.

Say, Pa,—what *is* the goldun rule
'At's allus at the Sund'y-school?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

130 *The Rivals; or the Showman's Ruse*

A Tragi-Comedy, in One Act

PERSONS REPRESENTED

| | | |
|-----------------|---|-------------|
| BILLY MILLER | } | The Rivals |
| JOHNNY WILLIAMS | | |
| TOMMY WELLS | | Conspirator |

TIME—NOON. SCENE—Country Town—*Rear view of the Miller Mansion, showing Barn, with practical loft-window opening on alley-way, with colored-crayon poster beneath, announcing:—"BILLY MILLER's Big Show and Monstur Circus and Equareum! A shour-bath fer Each and All fer 20 pins. This Afternoon! Don't fer git the Date!" Enter TOMMY WELLS and JOHNNY WILLIAMS, who gaze a while at poster, TOMMY secretly smiling and winking at BILLY MILLER, concealed at loft-window above.*

TOMMY [*to JOHNNY*].—

Guess 'at Billy hain't got back,—

Can't see nothin' through the crack—

Can't hear nothin' neether—No!

. . . Thinks he's got the dandy show,
Don't he?

JOHNNY [*scornfully*].—

'Course! but what *I* care?—

He hain't got no show in there!—

What's *he* got in there but that

Old hen, cooped up with a cat

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' a turkle, an' that thing
'At he calls his "circus-ring"?
"*What a circus-ring!*" I'd *quit!*
Bet mine's twic't as big as it!

TOMMY—

Yes, but *you* got no machine
W'at you bathe with, painted green,
With a string to work it, guess!

JOHNNY [*contemptuously*!—

Folks don't *bathe* in *circuses!*—
Ladies comes to *mine*, you bet!
I' got seats where girls can set;
An' a dressin'-room, an' all,
Fixed up in my pony's stall—
Yes, an' I' got *carpet*, too,
Fer the tumblers, and a blue
Center-pole!

TOMMY—

Well, Billy, he's
Got a tight-rope an' trapeze,
An' a hoop 'at he jumps through
Head-first!

JOHNNY—

Well, what's *that* to do—
Lightin' on a pile o' hay?
Hain't no *actin'* thataway!

TOMMY—

Don't care what you say, he draws
Bigger crowds than you do, 'cause

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sence he started up, I know
All the fellers says his show
Is the best-un!

JOHNNY—

Yes, an' he
Better not tell things on me!
His old circus hain't no good!—
'Cause he's got the neighborhood
Down on me he thinks 'at I'm
Goin' to stand it all the time;
Thinks ist 'cause my Pa don't 'low
Me to fight, he's got me now,
An' can say I lie, an' call
Me ist anything at all!
Billy Miller thinks I am
'Feard to say 'at he says "*dam*"—
Yes, and *worser* ones! and I'm
Goin' to tell his folks sometime!—
An' ef he don't shet his head
I'll tell worse 'an *that* he said
When he fought Willie King—
An' got licked like ever'thing!—
Billy Miller better shin
Down his Daddy's lane ag'in,
Like a cowardy-calf, an' climb
In fer home another time!
Better—

[Here BILLY leaps down from the loft upon his unsuspecting victim; and two minutes later, JOHNNY, with the half of a straw hat, a bleeding nose, and a straight rent across one trousers-knee, makes his inglorious—exit.]

ARMAZINDY

131

Armazindy

A RMAZINDY;—fambily name
Ballenger,—you'll find the same,
As her daddy answered it,
In the old War-rickords yit,—
And, like him, she's airnt the good
Will o' all the neighborhood.—
Name ain't down in *History*,—
But, i jucks! it *ort* to be!

Folks is got respec' fer *her*—
Armazindy Ballenger!—
'Specially the ones 'at knows
Fac's o' how her story goes
From the start:—Her father blowed
Up—eternally furloughed—
When the old "Sultana" bu'st,
And sich men wuz needed wusst.—
Armazindy, 'bout fourteen-
Year-old then—and thin and lean
As a kildee,—but *my la*!—
Blamedest nerve you ever saw!
The girl's mother'd *allus* be'n
Sickly—wuz consumed when
Word came 'bout her husband.—So
Folks perdicted *she'd* soon go—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

(Kind o' grief *I* understand,
Losin' *my* companion,—and
Still a widower—and still
Hinted at, like neighbors will!)
So, app'inted, as folks said,
Ballenger a-bein' dead,
Widder, 'peared-like, gradjully,
Jes' grieved after him tel *she*
Died, nex' Aprile wuz a year,—
And, in Armazindy's keer
Leavin' the two twins, as well
As her pore old miz'able
Old-maid aunty 'at had be'n
Struck with palsy, and wuz then
Jes' a he'pless charge on *her*—
Armazindy Ballenger.

Jevver watch a primrose 'bout
Minute 'fore it blossoms out—
Kind o' loosen-like, and blow
Up its muscles, don't you know,
And, all suddent, bu'st and bloom
Out life-size?—Well, I persume
'At's the only measure I
Kin size Armazindy by!—
Jes' a *child*, one minute,—nex',
Woman-grown, in all respec's
And intents and purposuz—
'At's what Armazindy wuz!

Jes' a *child*, I tell ye! Yit
She made things git up and git

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Round that little farm o' hern!—
Shouldered all the whole concern;—
Feed the stock, and milk the cows—
Run the *farm* and run the *house*!—
Only thing she didn't do
Wuz to plow and harvest too—
But the house and childern took
Lots o' keer—and had to look
After her old fittified
Grand-aunt.—Lord! ye could 'a' cried,
Seein' Armazindy smile,
'Peared-like, sweeter all the while!
And I've heerd her laugh and say:—
"Jes' afore Pap marched away,
He says 'I depend on *you*,
Armazindy, come what may—
You must be a Soldier, too!'"

Neighbors, from the fust, 'ud come—
And she'd *let* 'em help her *some*,—
"Thanky, ma'am!" and "Thanky, sir!"
But no charity fer *her*!—
"*She* could raise the means to pay
Fer her farm-hands ever' day
Sich wuz needed!"—And she *could*—
In cash-money jes' as good
As farm produc's ever brung
Their perducer, *old* er young!
So folks humored her and smiled,
And at last wuz rickonciled
Fer to let her have her own
Way about it.—But a-goin'

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Past to town, they'd stop and see
"Armazindy's fambily,"
As they'd allus laugh and say,
And look sorry right away,
Thinkin' of her Pap, and how
He'd indorse his "Soldier" now!

'Course *she* couldn't never be
Much in young-folks' company—
Plenty of *in-vites* to go,
But das't leave the house, you know—
'Less'n *Sund'ys* sometimes, when
Some old *Granny*'d come and 'ten'
Things, while Armazindy *has*
Got away fer Church er "Class."
Most the youngsters *liked* her—and
'Twuzn't hard to understand,—
Fer, by time she wuz sixteen,
Purtier girl you never seen—
'Ceptin' she lacked schoolin', ner
Couldn't rag out stylisher—
Like some *neighbor-girls*, ner thumb
On their blame' melodium,
Whilse their pore old mothers sloshed
Round the old back-porch and washed
Their clothes fer 'em—rubbed and scrubbed
Fer girls'd ort to jes' be'n clubbed!

—And jes' sich a girl wuz Jule
Reddinhouse.—*She'd* be'n to school
At *New Thessaly*, i gum!—
Fool before, but that he'pped *some*—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Stablished-like more confidence
'At she *never* had no sense.
But she wuz a cunnin', sly,
Meek and lowly sort o' lie,
'At men-folks like me and you
B'lieves jes' 'cause we ortn't to,—
Jes' as purty as a snake,
And as *pizen*—mercy sake!
Well, about them times it wuz,
Young Sol Stephens th'ashed fer us;
And we sent him over to
Armazindy's place to do
Her work fer her.—And-sir! Well—
Mighty little else to tell,—
Sol he fell in love with her—
Armazindy Ballenger!

Bless ye!—'Ll of all the love
'At I've ever yit knowed of,
That-air case o' theirn beat all!
W'y, she *worshiped* him!—And Sol,
'Peared-like could 'a' kissed the sod
(Sayin' is) where that girl trod!
Went to town, she did, and bought
Lot o' things 'at neighbors thought
Mighty strange fer *her* to buy,—
Raal chintz dress-goods—and 'way high!—
Cut long in the skyrt,—also
Gaiter-pair o' shoes, you know;
And lace collar;—yes, and fine
Stylish hat, with ivy-vine
And red ribbons, and these-'ere
Artificial flowers and queer

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Little beads and spangles, and
Oysturch-feathers round the band!
Wore 'em, Sund'ys, fer a while—
Kind o' went to Church in style,
Sol and Armazindy!—Tel
It was noised round purty well
They wuz *promised*.—And they wuz—
Sich news travels—well it does!—
Pity 'at *that* did!—Fer jes'
That-air fac' and nothin' less
Must 'a' putt it in the mind
O' Jule Reddinhouse to find
Out *some* dratted way to hatch
Out *some* plan to break the match—
'Cause she *done* it!—*How?* they's-none
Knows adzac'ly *what* she done;
Some claims she writ letters to
Sol's folks, up nigh Pleasant View
Somers—and described, you see,
"Armazindy's fambily"—
Hintin' "ef Sol married *her*,
He'd jes' be pervidin' fer
Them-air twins o' hern, and old
Palsied aunt 'at couldn't hold
Spoon to mouth, and layin' near
Bedrid on to eighteen year,
And still likely, 'pearantly,
To live out the century!"
Well—whatever plan Jule laid
Out to reach the p'int she made,
It wuz *desper't*—And she won,
Finully, by marryun

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sol herse'f—*e-lopin'*, too,
With him, like she *had* to do,—
'Cause her folks 'ud allus swore
"Jule should never marry pore!"

This-here part the story I
Allus haf to hurry by,—
Way 'at Armazindy jes'
Dropped back in her linsey dress,
And grabbed holt her loom, and shet
Her jaws square.—And ef she fret
Any 'bout it—never 'peared
Sign 'at *neighbors* seed er heerd;—
Most folks liked her all the more—
I know *I* did—certain-shore!—
(Course *I'd* knowed her *Pap*, and what
Stock she come of.—Yes, and thought,
And think *yit*, no man on earth
'S worth as much as that girl's worth!)

As fer Jule and Sol, they had
Their sheer!—less o' good than bad!—
Her folks let her go.—They said,
"Spite o' them she'd made her bed
And must sleep in it!"—But she,
'Peared-like, didn't sleep so free
As she ust to—ner so *late*,
Ner so *fine*, I'm here to state!—
Sol wuz pore, of course, and she
Wuzn't ust to poverty—
Ner she didn't 'pear to jes'
'Filiate with lonesomeness,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Cause Sol *he* wuz off and out
With his th'asher nigh about
Half the time; er, season done,
He'd be off mi-anderun
Round the country, here and there,
Swoppin' hosses. Well, that-air
Kind o' livin' didn't suit
Jule a bit!—and then, to boot,
She had now the keer o' two
Her own childern—and to do
Her own work and cookin'—yes,
And sometimes fer *hands*, I guess,
Well as fambily of her own.—
Cut her pride clean to the bone!
So how *could* the whole thing end?—
She set down, one night, and penned
A short note, like—'at she sewed
On the childern's blanket—blowed
Out the candle—pulled the door
To close after her—and, shore-
Footed as a cat is, clumb'
In a rigg there and left home,
With a man a-drivin' who
"Loved her ever fond and true,"
As her note went on to say,
When Sol read the thing next day.

Raaly didn't 'pear to be
Extry waste o' sympathy
Over Sol—pore feller!—Yit,
Sake o' them-air little bit

THE HOOSIER BOOK

O' two *orphants*—as you might
Call 'em *then*, by law and right,—
Sol's old friends wuz sorry, and
Tried to hold him out their hand
Same as a'llus: But he'd flinch—
Tel, jes' 'peared-like, inch by inch,
He let *all* holts go; and so
Took to drinkin', don't you know,—
Tel, to make a long tale short,
He wuz fuller than he ort
To 'a' be'n, at work one day
'Bout his th'asher, and give way,
Kind 'o' like and fell and ketched
In the beltin'.

. . . Rid and fetched
Armazindy to him.—He
Begged me to.—But time 'at she
Reached his side, he smiled and *tried*
To speak—Couldn't. So he died. . . .
Hands all turned and left her *there*
And went somers else—*somewhere*.
Last, she called us back—in clear
Voice as man'll ever hear—
Clear, and stiddy, 'peared to me,
As her old Pap's ust to be.—
Give us orders what to do
'Bout the body—he'pped us, too.
So it wuz, Sol Stephens passed
In Armazindy's hands at last.
More'n that, she claimed 'at she
Had consent from him to be

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Mother to his childern—now
'Thout no parents anyhow.

Yes-sir! and she's *got* 'em, too,—
Folks saw nothin' else 'ud do—
So they let her have *her way*—
Like she's doin' yit to-day!
Years now, I've be'n coaxin' her—
Armazindy Ballenger—
To in-large her fambily
Jes' *one* more by takin' *me*—
Which I'm feared she never will,
Though I'm 'lectioneerin' still.

132 *Writin' Back to the Home-Folks*

MY dear old friends—It jes' beats all,
The way you write a letter
So's ever' *last* line beats the *first*,
And ever' *next-un's* better!—
W'y, ever' fool-thing you putt down
You make so *interestin'*,
A feller, readin' of 'em all,
Can't tell which is the *best-un*.

It's all so comfortin' and good,
'Pears-like I almost *hear* ye
And git more sociabler, you know,
And hitch my cheer up near ye

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And jes' smile on ye like the sun
Acrosst the whole per-rairies
In Aprile when the thaw's begun
And country couples marries.

It's all so good-old-fashioned like
To *talk* jes' like we're *thinkin'*,
Without no hidin' back o' fans
And giggle-un and winkin',
Ner sizin' how each other's dressed—
Like some is allus doin'—
"*Is* Marthy Ellen's basque be'n *turned*
Er shore-enough a new-un!"—

Er "ef Steve's city-friend hain't jes'
'A leetle kind o' sort o' '"—
Er "wears them-air blame' eye-glasses
Jes' 'cause he hadn't ort to?"—
And so straight on, *dad-libitum*,
Tel all of us feels, *someway*,
Jes' like our "comp'ny" wuz the best
When we git up to come 'way!

That's why I like *old* friends like you,—
Jes' 'cause you're so *abidin'*.—
Ef I was built to live "*fer keeps*,"
My principul residin'
Would be amongst the folks 'at kep'
Me allus *thinkin'* of 'em
And sort o' eechin' all the time
To tell 'em how I love 'em.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sich folks, you know, I jes' love so
I wouldn't live without 'em,
Er couldn't even drap asleep
But what I *dreamp'* about 'em,—
And ef we minded God, I guess
We'd *all* love one another
Jes' like one famb'ly,—me and Pap
And Madaline and Mother.

133 *The Muskingum Valley*

THE Muskingum Valley—How longin' the gaze
A feller throws back on its long summer days,
When the smiles of its blossoms and *my* smiles wuz one-
And-the-same, from the rise to the set o' the sun :
Wher' the hills sloped as soft as the dawn down to noon,
And the river run by like an old fiddle-tune,
And the hours glided past as the bubbles 'ud glide,
All so loaferin'-like, 'long the path o' the tide.

In the Muskingum Valley—it 'peared like the skies
Looked lovin' on me as my own mother's eyes,
While the laughin'-sad song of the stream seemed to be
Like a lullaby angels was wastin' on me—
Tel, swimmin' the air, like the gossamer's thread,
'Twixt the blue underneath and the blue overhead,
My thoughts went astray in that so-to-speak realm
Wher' Sleep bared her breast as a pillar fer them.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

In the Muskingum Valley, though far, far a-way,
I know that the winter is bleak there to-day—
No bloom ner perfume on the brambles er trees—
Wher' the buds used to bloom, now the icicles freeze.—
That the grass is all hid 'long the side of the road
Wher' the deep snow has drifted and shifted and blowed—
And I feel in my life the same changes is there,—
The frost in my heart, and the snow in my hair.

But, Muskingum Valley! my memory sees
Not the white on the ground, but the green in the trees—
Not the froze'-over gorge, but the current, as clear
And warm as the drop that has jes' trickled here;
Not the choked-up ravine, and the hills topped with snow,
But the grass and the blossoms I knowed long ago
When my little bare feet wundered down wher' the stream
In the Muskingum Valley flowed on like a dream.

134 *"How Did You Rest, Last Night?"*

"**H**OW did you rest, last night?"—
I've heard my gran'paw say
Them words a thousand times—that's right—
Jes' them words thataway!
As punctchul-like as morning dast
To ever heave in sight
Gran'paw 'ud allus haf to ast—
"How did you rest, last night?"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Us young-uns used to grin,
At breakfast, on the sly,
And mock the wobble of his chin
And eyebrows helt so high
And kind: "*How did you rest, last night?*"
We'd mumble and let on
Our voices trimbled, and our sight
Was dim, and hearin' gone.

Bad as I used to be,
All I'm a-wantin' is
As puore and ca'm a sleep fer me
And sweet a sleep as his!
And so I pray, on Jedgment Day
To wake, and with its light
See *his* face dawn, and hear him say—
"How did you rest, last night?"

135 *Up and Down Old Brandywine*

UP and down old Brandywine,
In the days 'at's past and gone—
With a dad-burn hook-and-line
And a saplin'-pole—i swawn!
I've had more fun, to the square
Inch, than ever *anywhere*!
Heaven to come can't discount *mine*,
Up and down old Brandywine!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Hain't nō sense in *wishin'*—yit

Wisht to goodness I *could* jes'

"Gee" the blame' world round and git

Back to that old happiness!—

Kind o' drive back in the shade

"The old Covered Bridge" there laid

'Crosst the crick, and sort o' soak

My soul over, hub and spoke!

Honest, now!—it hain't no *dream*

'At I'm wantin',—but *the fac's*

As they wuz; the same old stream,

And the same old times, i jacks!—

Gimme back my bare feet—and

Stonebruise too!—And scratched and tanned!—

And let hottest dog-days shine

Up and down old Brandywine!

In and on betwixt the trees

'Long the banks, pour down yer noon,

Kind o' curdled with the breeze

And the yallerhammer's tune;

And the smokin', chokin' dust

O' the turnpike at its wusst—

Saturd'ys, say, when it seems

Road's jes' jammed with country teams!—

Whilse the old town, fur away

'Crosst the hazy pastur'-land,

Dozed-like in the heat o' day

Peaceful' as a hired hand.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jolt the gravel th'ough the floor
O' the old bridge!—grind and roar
With yer blame' percession-line—
Up and down old Brandywine!

Souse me and my new straw-hat
Off the foot-log!—what *I* care?—
Fist shoved in the crown o' that—
Like the old Clown ust to wear.—
Wouldn't swop it fer a' old
Gin-u-wine raal crown o' gold!—
Keep yer *King* ef you'll gimme
Jes' the boy I ust to be!

Spill my fishin'-worms! er steal
My best "goggle-eye!"—but you
Can't lay hands on joys I feel
Nibblin' like they ust to do!
So, in memory, to-day
Same old ripple lips away
At my cork and saggin' line,
Up and down old Brandywine!

There the logs is, round the hill,
Where "Old Irvin" ust to lift
Out sunfish from daylight till
Dewfall—'fore he'd leave "The Drift"
And give *us* a chance—and then
Kind o' fish back home again,
Ketchin' 'em jes' left and right
Where *we* hadn't got "a bite"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er, 'way windin' out and in,—
Old path th'ough the iurnweeds
And dog-fennel to yer chin—
Then come suddent, th'ough the reeds
And cattails, smack into where
Them-air woods-hogs ust to scare
Us clean 'crosst the County-line,
Up and down old Brandywine!

But the dim roar o' the dam
It 'ud coax us further still
To'rds the old race, slow and ca'm,
Slidin' on to Huston's mill—
Where, I 'spect, "the Freeport crowd"
Never *warmed* to us er 'lowed
We wuz quite so overly
Welcome as we aimed to be.

Still it 'peared-like ever'thing—
Fur away from home as *there*—
Had more *relish*-like, i jing!—
Fish in stream, er bïrd in air!
O them rich old bottom-lands,
Past where Cowden's Schoolhouse stands!
Wortermelons—*master-mine*!
Up and down old Brandywine!

And sich pop-paws!—Lumps o' raw
Gold and green,—jes' oozy th'ough
With ripe yaller—like you've saw
Custard-pie with no crust to:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And jes' *gorges* o' wild plums,
Till a feller'd suck his thumbs
Clean up to his elbows! *My!*—
Me some more er lem me die!

Up and down old Brandywine!
Stripe me with pokeberry-juice!—
Flick me with a pizen-vine
And yell "*Yip!*" and lem me loose!
—Old now as I then wuz young,
'F I could sing as I *have* sung,
Song 'ud surely ring *dee-vine*
Up and down old Brandywine!

136

My Henry

HE'S jes' a great, big, awk'ard, hulkin'
Feller,—humped, and sort o' sulkin'-
Like, and ruth'er still-appearin'—
Kind-ās-ef he wuzn't keerin'
Whether school helt out er not—
That's my Henry, to a dot!

Allus kind o' liked him—whether
Childern, er growed-up together!
Fifteen year' ago and better,
'Fore he ever knowed a letter,
Run acrosst the little fool
In my Primer-class at school.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

When the Teacher wuzn't lookin'
He'd be th'owin' wads; er crookin'
Pins; er sprinklin' pepper, more'n
Likely, on the stove; er borin'
Gimlet-holes up thue his desk—
Nothin' *that* boy wouldn't resk!

But, somehow, as I was goin'
On to say, he seemed so knowin',
Other ways, and cute and cunnin'—
Allus wuz a notion runnin'
Thue my giddy, fool-head he
Jes' had be'n cut out fer me!

Don't go much on *prophesyin'*
But last night whilse I wuz fryin'
Supper, with that man a-pitchin'
Little Marthy 'round the kitchen,
Think-says-I, "Them baby's eyes
Is my Henry's, jes' p'cise!"

137

When Lide Married Him

WHEN Lide married *him*—w'y, she had to jes' dee-fy
The whole popilation!—But she never bat' an eye!
Her parents begged, and *threatened*—she must give him up
—that *he*
Wuz jes' "a common drunkard!"—And he *wuz*, appear-
antly.—

Swore they'd chase him off the place
Ef he ever showed his face—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Long after she'd *eloped* with him and *married* him fer shore!—

When Lide married *him*, it wuz "*Katy, bar the door!*"

When Lide married *him*—Well! she had to go and be
A *hired girl* in town somewheres—while he tromped round
to see

What *he* could git that *he* could do,—you might say, jes'
sawed wood

From door to door!—that's what he done—'cause that wuz
best he could!

And the strangest thing, i jing!

Wuz, he didn't *drink* a thing,—

But jes' got down to bizness, like he someway *wanted* to,
When Lide married *him*, like they warn'd her *not* to do!

When Lide married *him*—er, ruther *had* be'n married
A little up'ards of a year—some feller come and carried
That *hired girl* away with him—a ruther *stylish* feller
In a bran-new green spring-wagon, with the wheels striped
red and yellor:

And he whispered, as they driv

To'rds the country, "*Now we'll live!*"—

And *somepin' else* she *laugh'd* to hear, though both her
eyes wuz dim,

'Bout "*trustin' Love and Heav'n above*, sence Lide married
him!"

"Ringworm Frank"

JEST Frank Reed's his *real* name—though
 Boys all calls him "Ringworm Frank,"
 'Cause he allus *runs round* so.—
 No man can't tell where to bank
 Frank'll be,
 Next you see
 Er *hear* of him!—Drat his melts!—
 That man's allus *somers else!*

We're old pards.—But Frank he jest
 Can't stay still!—Wuz *prosper'n'* here,
 But lit out on funder West
 Somers on a ranch, last year :
 Never heard
 Nary a word
 How he liked it, tel to-day,
 Got this card, reads thisaway :—

"Dad-burn climate out here makes
 Me homesick all Winter long,
 And when Spring-time *comes*, it takes
 Two pee-wees to sing one song,—
 One sing '*pee,*'
 And the other one '*wee!*'
 Stay right where you air, old pard.—
 Wisht *I* wuz this postal card!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

139

The Youthful Patriot

O WHAT did the little boy do
 'At nobody wanted him to?
Didn't do nothin' but romp an' run,
An' whoop an' holler an' bang his gun
An' bu'st fire-crackers, an' ist have fun—
 An' 'at's aH the little boy done!

140

Folks at Lonesomeville

PORE-Folks lives at Lonesomeville—
 Lawzy! but they're pore!
Houses with no winders in,
 And hardly any door:
Chimblly all tore down, and no
 Smoke in that at all—
Ist a stovepipe through a hole
 In the kitchen wall!

Pump 'at's got no handle on;
 And no woodshed—And, *wooh!*—
Mighty cold there, choppin' wood,
 Like pore-folks has to do!—
Winter-time, and snow and sleet
 Ist fairly fit to kill!—
Hope to goodness *Santy Claus*
 Goes to Lonesomeville!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

141 *The Three Jolly Hunters*

O THERE were three jolly hunters;
And a-hunting they did go,
With a spaniel-dog, and a pointer-dog,
And a setter-dog also.

Looky there!

And they hunted and they hal-looed;
And the first thing they did find
Was a dingling-dangling hornet's-nest
A-swinging in the wind.

Looky there!

And the first one said—"What is it?"
Said the next, "We'll punch and see":
And the next one said, a mile from there,
"I wish we'd let it be!"

Looky there!

And they hunted and they hal-looed;
And the next thing they did raise
Was a bobbin' bunny cottontail
That vanished from their gaze.

Looky there!

One said it was a hot baseball,
Zippt through the brambly thatch,
But the others said 'twas a note by post,
Or a telegraph-despatch.

Looky there!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So they hunted and they hal-looed;
And the next thing they did sight
Was a great big bulldog chasing them,
And a farmer, hollerin' "Skite!"
Looky there!

And the first one said, "Hi-jinktum!"
And the next, "Hi-jinktum-jee!"
And the last one said, "Them very words
Had just occurred to me!"
Looky there!

142 *A Few of the Bird-Family*

THE Old Bob-white, and Chipbird;
The Flicker, and Chewink,
And little hopty-skip bird
Along the river-brink.

The Blackbird, and Snowbird,
The Chicken-hawk, and Crane;
The glossy old black Crow-bird,
And Buzzard down the lane.

The Yellowbird, and Redbird,
The Tomtit, and the Cat;
The Thrush, and that Redhead-bird
The rest's all pickin' at!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The Jay-bird, and the Bluebird,
The Sapsuck, and the Wren—
The Cockadoodle-doo-bird,
And our old Settin'-hen!

143

The Toy Penny-Dog

MA put my Penny-Dog
Safe on the shelf,
And left no one home but him,
Me and myself;
So I clumbed a big chair
I pushed to the wall—
But the Toy Penny-Dog
Ain't there at all!
I went back to Dolly—
And *she* 'uz gone too,
And little Switch 'uz layin' there;—
And Ma says "*Boo!*"
And there she wuz a-peepin'
Through the front-room door:
And I ain't goin' to be a bad
Little girl no more!

HOME-FOLKS

144

Home-Folks

HOME-FOLKS!—Well, that-air name, to me
Sounds jis the same as *poetry*—
That is, ef poetry is jis
As sweet as I've hearn tell it is!

Home-Folks—they're jis the same as *kin*—
All brung up, same as *we* have bin,
Without no overpowerin' sense
Of their uncommon consequence!

They've bin to school, but not to git
The habit fastened on 'em yit
So as to ever interfere
With *other* work 'at's waitin' here:

Home-Folks has crops to plant and plow,
Er lives in town and keeps a cow;
But whether country-jakes er town-,
They know when eggs is up er down!

La! can't you *spot* 'em—when you meet
'Em *anywheres*—in field er street?
And can't you see their faces, bright
As circus-day, heave into sight?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And can't you hear their "Howdy!" clear
As a brook's chuckle to the ear,
And allus find their laughin' eyes
As fresh and clear as morning skies?

And can't you—when they've gone away
Jis feel 'em shakin' hands, all day?
And feel, too, you've bin higher raised
By sich a meetin'?—God be praised!

Oh, Home-Folks! you're the best of all
'At ranges this terreschul ball,—
But, north er south, er east er west,
It's home is where you're at your best.—

It's home—it's home your faces shine,
In-nunder your own fig and vine—
Your fambly and your neighbors 'bout
Ye, and the latch-string hangin' out

Home-Folks—at *home*,—I know o' one
Old feller now 'at hain't got none.—
Invite him—he may hold back some—
But *you* invite him, and he'll come.

HOWDY, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out!
Bin a month o' Sund'ys sence I seen you ~~here~~about.
Kind o' bin a-layin' in, from the frost and snow?
Good to see you out ag'in, it's bin so long ago!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Plows like slicin' cheese, and sod's loppin' over even;
Loam's like gingerbread, and clod's softer'n deceivin'—
Mister Hop-Toad, honest-true — Spring-time — don't you
love it?

You old rusty rascal you, at the bottom of it!

Oh! oh! oh!

I grabs up my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

Make yourse'f more comfo'bler—square round at your
ease—

Don't set saggin' slanchwise, with your nose below your
knees.

Swell that fat old throat o' yourn and lemme see you
swaller;

Straighten up and h'ist your head!—*You* don't owe a
dollar!—

Hain't no mor'gage on your land—ner no taxes, nuther;

You don't haf to work no roads, even ef you'd ruther.

'F I was you, and *fixed* like you, I raily wouldn't keer
To swop fer life and hop right in the presidential cheer!

Oh! oh! oh!

I hauls back my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dee-do!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Long about next Aprile, hoppin' down the furry,
Won't you mind I ast you what 'peared to be the hurry?—
Won't you mind I hooked my hoe and hauled you back and
smiled?—

W'y, bless you, Mister Hop-Toad, I love you like a child!
S'pose I'd want to 'flict you any more'n what you air?—
S'pose I think you got no rights 'cept the warts you wear?
Hulk, sulk, and blink away, you old bloat-eyed rowdy!—
Hain't you got a word to say?—Won't you tell me
"Howdy"?

Oh! oh! oh!

I swish round my old hoe;

But I sees *you*,

And s' I, "Ooh-ooh!

Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! How-dec-do!"

146

Uncle Sidney's Logic

PA wunst he scold' an' says to me,—
"Don't *play* so much, but try
To *study* more, and nen you'll be
A great man, by an' by."
Nen Uncle Sidney says, "You let
Him *be* a boy an' play.—
The greatest man on earth, I bet,
'Ud trade with him to-day!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

147 *The Schoolboy's Favorite*

*Over the river and through the wood
Now Grandmother's cap I spy:
Hurrah for the fun! Is the pudding done?
Hurrah for the pumpkin-pie!*

—SCHOOL READER.

FER any boy 'at's little as me,
Er any little girl,
That-un's the goodest poetry-piece.
In any book in the worl'!
An' ef grown-peoples wuz little ag'in
I bet they'd say so, too,
Ef *they'd* go see *their* ole Gran'ma,
Like our Pa lets us do!

*Over the river an' through the wood
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' I'll tell you *why* 'at's the goodest piece:—
'Cause it's ist like *we* go
To *our* Gran'ma's, a-visitun there,
When our Pa he says so;
An' Ma she fixes my little cape-coat
An' little fuzz-cap; an' Pa
He tucks me away—an' yells "*Hoo-ray!*"—
An' whacks Ole Gray, an' drives the sleigh
Fastest you ever saw!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

*Over the river an' through the wood
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' Pa ist snuggles me 'tween his knees—
An' I he'p hold the lines,
An' peek out over the buffalo-robe;—
An' the wind ist *blows!*—an' the snow ist *snows!*—
An' the sun ist shines! an' shines!—
An' th' old horse tosses his head an' coughs
Th' frost back in our face.—
An' I' ruther go to my Gran'ma's
Than any other place!

*Over the river an' through the wood
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

An' all the peoples they is in town
Watches us whizzin' past
To go a-visitun *our* Gran'ma's,
Like we all went there last;—
But *they* can't go, like ist *our* folks
An' Johanny an' Lotty, an' three
Er four neighbor-childerns, an' Rober-ut Volney
An' Charley an' Maggy an' me!

*Over the river an' through the wood
Now Gran'mother's cap I spy:
Hurrah fer the fun!—Is the puddin' done?—
Hurrah fer the punkin-pie!*

The Little Mock-Man

THE Little Mock-man on the Stairs—
 He mocks the lady's horse 'at rares
 At bi-sickles an' things,—
 He mocks the mens 'at rides 'em, too;
 An' mocks the Movers, drivin' through,
 An' hollers "Here's the way *you* do
 With them-air hitchin'-strings!"
 "Ho! ho!" he'll say,
 Ole Settlers' Day,
 When they're all jogglin' by,—
 "You look like *this*,"
 He'll say, an' twis'
 His mouth an' squint his eye
 An' 'tend like *he* wuz beat the bass
 Drum at both ends—an' toots and blaes
 Ole dinner-horn an' puffs his face—
 The Little Mock-man on the Stairs!

The Little Mock-man on the Stairs
 Mocks all the peoples all he cares
 'At passes up an' down!
 He mocks the chickens round the door,
 An' mocks the girl 'at scrubs the floor,
 An' mocks the rich, an' mocks the pore,
 An' ever'thing in town!
 "Ho! ho!" says he,
 To you er me;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' ef we turns an' looks,
He's all cross-eyed
An' mouth all wide
Like Giunts is, in books.—
"Ho! ho!" he yells, "look here at *me*,"
An' rolls his fat eyes roun' an' glares,—
"You look like *this*!" he says, says he—
The Little Mock-man on the Stairs!

The Little Mock—

The Little Mock—

*The Little Mock-man on the Stairs,
He mocks the music-box an' clock,
An' roller-sofy an' the chairs;
He mocks his Pa an' spec's he wears;
He mocks the man 'at picks the pears
An' plums an' peaches on the shares;
He mocks the monkeys an' the bears
On picture-bills, an' rips an' tears
'Em down,—an' mocks ist all he cares,
An' EVERYbody EVER'wheres!*

149. Summer-Time and Winter-Time

IN the golden noon-shine,
Or in the pink of dawn;
In the silver moonshine,
Or when the moon is gone;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Open eyes, or drowsy lids,
 'Wake or 'most asleep,
I can hear the katydids,—
 "Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"

Only in the winter-time
 Do they ever stop,
In the chip-and-splinter-time,
 When the backlogs pop,—
Then it is, the kettle-lids,
 While the sparkles leap,
Lisp like the katydids,—
 "Cheep! Cheep! Cheep!"

150 *My Dancin'-Days Is Over*

WHAT is it in old fiddle-chunes 'at makes me ketch
 my breath
And ripples up my backbone tel I'm tickled most
 to death?—
Kind o' like that sweet-sick feelin', in the long sweep of
 a swing,
The first you ever swung in, with yer first sweetheart,
 i jing!—
Yer first picnic—yer first ice-cream—yer first o' *ever'*-
 thing
 'At happened 'fore yer dancin'-days wuz over!

I never understood it—and I s'pose I never can,—
But right in town here, yisterd'y, I heerd a pore blind-
 man

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A-fiddlin' old "Gray Eagle"—*And*-sir! I jes' stopped
my load

O' hay and listened at him—yes, and watched the way he
"bow'd,"—

And back I went, plum forty year', with boys and girls
I knowed

And loved, long 'fore my dancin'-days wuz over!—

At high noon in yer city,—with yer blame' Magnetic-Cars
A-hummin' and a-screechin' past—and bands and G.

A. R.'s

A-marchin'—and fire-ingines.—*All* the noise, the whole
street through,

Wuz lost on me!—I only heard a whipperwill er two,
It 'peared-like, kind o' callin' 'crost the darkness and the
dew,

Them nights afore my dancin'-days wuz over.

'T 'uz Chused'y-night at Wetherell's, er We'n'sd'y-night at
Strawn's,

Er Fourth-o'-July-night at uther Tomps's house er John's!—

With old Lew Church from Sugar Crick, with that old
fiddle he

Had sawed clean through the Army, from Atlanty to
the sea—

And yit he'd fetched her home ag'in, so's he could play
fer me

Onc't more afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

The woods 'at's all be'n cut away wuz growin' same as
then;

The youngsters all wuz boys ag'in 'at's now all oldish
men;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And all the girls 'at *then* wuz girls—I saw 'em, one
and all,

As *plain* as then—the middle-sized, the short-and-fat, and
tall—

And 'peared-like, I danced "Tucker" fer 'em up and
down the wall

Jes' like afore my dancin'-days wuz over!

.

The facts is, I wuz *dazed* so 'at I clean fergot jes' where
I raily wuz,—a-blockin' streets, and still a-standin' there:

I heard the *po-leece* yellin', but my ears wuz kind o'
blurred—

My *eyes*, too, fer the odds o' that,—bekase I thought I
heard

My wife 'at's dead a-laughin'-like, and jokin', word-fer-
word

Jes' like afore her dancin'-days wuz over.

151

"Home Ag'in"

I 'M a-feelin' ruther sad,
Fer a father proud and glad
As I am—my only child
Home, and all so rickonciled!
Feel so strange-like, and don't know
What the mischief ails me so!
'Stid o' bad, I ort to be
Feelin' good pertickerly—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes, and extry thankful, too,
'Cause my nearest kith and kin,
My Elviry's schoolin' 's through,
And I' got her home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!

Same as ef her mother'd been
Livin', I have done my best
By the girl, and watchfulest;
Nussed her—keerful' as I could—
From a baby, day and night,—
Drawin' on the neighborhood
And the women-folks as light
As needssesity 'ud 'low—
'Cept in "teethin'," onc't, and fight
Through black-measles. Don't know now
How we ever saved the child!
Doc *he'd* give her up, and said,
As I stood there by the bed
Sort o' foolin' with her hair
On the hot, wet pillar there,
"Wuz no use!"—And at them-air
Very words she waked and smiled—
Yes, and *knowed* me. And that's where
I broke down, and simply jes'
Bellered like a boy—I guess!—
Women claim I did, but I
Allus helt I didn't cry
But wuz laughin',—and I *wuz*,—
Men don't cry like *women* does!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well, right then and there I felt
'T 'uz her mother's doin's, and,
Jes' like to mys'f, I knelt
Whisperin', "I understand." . . .
So I've raised her, you might say,
Stric'ly in the narrer way
'At her mother walked therein—
Not so quite religiously,
Yit still strivin'-like to do
Ever'thing a father *could*
Do he knowed the *mother* would
Ef she'd lived—And now all's through
And I' got her home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!

And I' been so lonesome, too,
Here o' late, especially,—
"Old Aunt Abigail," you know,
Ain't no company;—and so
Jes' the hired hand, you see—
Jonas—like a relative
More—sence he come here to live
With us, nigh ten year' ago.
Still he don't count much, you know,
In the way o' company—
Lonesome, 'peared-like, 'most as me!
So, as I say, I' been so
Special lonesome-like and blue,
With Elviry, like she's been,
'Way so much, last two or three
Year'—But now she's home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Driv in fer her yisterday,
Me and Jonas—gay and spry,—
We jes' cut up, all the way!—
Yes, and sung!—tel, blame it I
Keyed my voice up 'bout as high
As when—days 'at I wuz young—
“Buckwheat-notes” wuz all they sung.
Jonas bantered me, and 'greed
To sing one 'at town-folks sing.
Down at Split Stump 'er High-Low—
Some new “ballet,” said he, 'at he'd
Learnt—about “The Grape-vine Swing.”
And when *he* quit, *I* begun
To chune up my voice and run
Through the what's-called “scales” and “do
Sol-me-fa's” I *ust* to know—
Then let loose old favorite one,
“Hunters o' Kentucky!” *My!*
Tel I thought the boy would *die!*
And we *both* laughed—Yes, and still
Heerd more laughin', top the hill;
Fer we'd missed Elviry's train,
And she'd lit out 'crost the fields,—
Dewdrops dancin' at her heels,—
And cut up old Smoots's lane
So's to meet us. And there in
Shadder o' the chinkypin,
With a danglin' dogwood-bough
Bloomin' 'bove her—See her now!—
Sunshine sort o' flickerin' down
And a kind o' laughin' all
Round her new red parasol,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tryin' to git at *her!*—well—like:
I jumped out and showed 'em how—
Yes, and jes' the place to strike
That air mouth o' hern—as sweet
As the blossoms breshed her brow
Er sweet-williams round her feet—
White and blushy, too, as she
“Howdied” up to Jonas, and
Jieuked her head, and waved her hand.
“Hey!” says I, as she bounced in
The spring-wagon, reachin' back
To give *me* a lift, “whoop-ee!”
I-says-ee, “you're home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!”

Lord! how *wild* she wuz, and glad,
Gittin' home!—and things she had
To inquire about, and talk—
Plowin', plantin', and the stock—
News o' neighborhood; and how
Wuz the Deem-girls doin' now,
Sence that air young chicken-hawk
They was “tamin'” soared away.
With their settin'-hen, one day?—
(Said she'd got Mame's postal-card
'Bout it, very day 'at she
Started home from Bethany.)
How wuz produce—eggs, and lard?—
Er wuz stores still claimin' “hard
Times,” as usual? And, says she,
Troubled-like, “How's Deedie—say?
Sence pore child e-loped away

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And got back, and goin' to 'ply
Fer school-license by and by—
And where's 'Lijy workin' at?
And how's 'Aunt' and 'Uncle Jake'?
How wuz 'Old Maje'—and the cat?
And wuz Marthy's baby fat
As his 'Humpty-Dumpty' ma?
Sweetest thing she ever saw!—
Must run 'crost and see her, too,
Soon as she turned in and got
Supper fer us—smokin'-hot—
And the 'dishes' all wuz through.—”
Sick a supper! W'y, I set
There and et, and et, and et!—
Jes' et on, tel Jonas he
Pushed his chair back, laughed, and says,
“I could walk *his* log!” and we
All laughed then, tel 'Viry she
Lit the lamp—and I give in!—
Riz and kissed her: “Heaven bless
You!” says I—“you're home ag'in—
Same old dimple in your chin,
Same white apern,” I-says-ee,
“Same sweet girl, and good to see
As your *mother* ust to be,—
And I' got you home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!”

I turns then to go on by her
Through the door—and see her eyes
Both wuz swimmin', and she tries

THE HOOSIER BOOK

To say somepin'—can't—and so
Grabs and hugs and lets me go.
Noticed Aunt'y'd made a fire
In the settin'-room and gone
Back where her p'serves wuz on
Bilin' in the kitchen. I
Went out on the porch and set,
Thinkin'-like. And by and by
Heerd Elviry, soft and low,
At the organ, kind o' go
A mi-anderin' up and down
With her fingers 'mongst the keys—
"Vacant Chair" and "Old Camp-Groun'." . . .
Dusk was moist-like, with a breeze
Lazin' round the locus'-trees—
Heerd the hosses champin', and
Jonas feedin', and the hogs—
Yes, and katydids and frogs—
And a tree-toad, somers. Heerd
Also whipperwills,—*My land!*—
All so mournful ever'where—
Them out here, and her in there,—
'Most like 'tendin' *services!*
Anyway, I must 'a' jes
Kind o' drapped asleep, I guess;
'Cause when Jonas must 'a' passed
Me, a-comin' in, I knowed
Nothin' of it—yit it seemed
Sort o' like I kind o' dreamed
'Bout him, too, a-slippin' in,
And a-watchin' back to see
Ef I *wuz* asleep, and then

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Passin' in where Viry wuz ;
And where I declare it does
'Pear to me I heerd him say,
Wild and glad and whisperin'—
'Peared-like heerd him say, says-ee,
"Ah! I got you home ag'in—
Home ag'in with me!"

152 To "Uncle Remus"

WE love your dear old face and voice—
We're all Miss Sally's Little Boys,
Climbin' your knee,
In ecstasy,
Rejoicin' in your Creeturs' joys
And trickery.

The Lord who made the day and night,
He made the Black man and the White;
So, in like view,
We hold it true
That He hain't got no favorite—
Unless it's you.

153 A Feel in the Chris'mas-Air

THEY'S a kind o' feel in the air, to me,
When the Chris'mas-times sets in,
That's about as much of a mystery
As ever I've run ag'in'!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fer instunce, now, whilse I gain in weight
And ginerall health, I swear
They's a *goneness* somers I can't quite state—
A kind o' *feel* in the air.

They's a *feel* in the Chris'mas-air goes right
To the spot where a man *lives* at!—
It gives a feller a' appetite—
They ain't no doubt about *that*!—
And yit they's *somepin'*—I don't know what—
That follers me, here and there,
And ha'nts and worries and spares me not—
A kind o' *feel* in the air!

They's a *feel*, as I say, in the air that's jest
As blame-don sad as sweet!—
In the same ra-sho as I feel the best
And am spryest on my feet,
They's allus a kind o' sort of a' *ache*
That I can't lo-cate no-where;—
But it comes with *Chris'mas*; and no mistake!—
A kind o' *feel* in the air.

Is it the racket the childern raise?—
W'y, *no!*—God bless 'em!—*no!*—
Is it the eyes and the cheeks ablaze—
Like my *own* wuz, long ago?—
Is it the bleat o' the whistle and beat
O' the little toy-drum and blare
O' the horn?—*No! no!*—it is jest the sweet—
The sad-sweet *feel* in the air.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

154

Cassander

“**C**ASSANDER! O Cassander!”—her *mother's voice*
seems cle'r

As ever, from the old back-porch, a-hollerin' fer her—
specially in airy Spring—like May, two year' ago—
Last time she hollered fer her,—and Cassander didn't hear!

Cassander wuz so chirpy-like and sociable and free,
And good to ever'body, and wuz even good to me
Though *I* wuz jes' a common—well, a farm-hand, don't
you know,
A-workin' on her father's place, as pore as pore could be!

Her bein' jes' a' only child, Cassander had her way
A good-'eal more'n other girls; and neighbors ust to say
She looked most like her Mother, but wuz turned most
like her Pap,—
Except *he* had no use fer town-folks then—ner yit to-day!

I can't claim she encouraged *me*: She'd let me drive her in
To town sometimes, on Saturd'ys, and fetch her home
ag'in,

Tel onc't she 'scused “Old Moll” and me,—and some
blame' city-chap,
He driv her home, two-forty style, in face o' kith and kin.

She even tried to make him stay fer supper, but I 'low
He must 'a' kind o' 'spicioned some objections.—Anyhow,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Her mother callin' at her, whilse her father stood and
shook

His fist,—the town-chap turnt his team and made his
partin' bow.

"Cassander! *You*, Cassander!"—hear her mother jès' as
plain,

And see Cassander blushin' like the peach-tree down the
lane,

Whilse I sneaked on apast her, with a sort o' hang-dog
look,

A-feelin' cheap as sorghum and as green as sugar-cane!

(You see, I'd *skooted* when she met her *town-beau*—when,
in fact,

Ef I'd had sense I'd *stayed* fer her.—But sense wuz what
I *lacked*!

So I'd cut home ahead o' her, so's I could tell 'em what
Wuz keepin' her. And—*you* know how a jealous fool'll
act!)

I past her, I wuz sayin',—but she never turnt her head;
I *swallered-like* and cle'ed my th'oat—but that wuz all
I said;

And whilse I hoped fer some word back, it wuzn't what
I got.—

That girl'll not stay stiller on the day she's layin' dead!

Well, that-air silence *lasted*!—Ust to listen ever' day
I'd be at work and hear her mother callin' thataway;

I'd *sight* Cassander, mayby, cuttin' home acrost the blue
And drizzly fields; but nary answer—nary word to say!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Putt in about two weeks o' that—two weeks o' rain and mud,

Er mostly so: I couldn't plow. The old crick like a flood:

And, lonesome as a borried dog, I'd waded them old woods through—

The dogwood blossoms white as snow, and redbuds red as blood.

Last time her mother called her—sich a morning like as now:

The robins and the bluebirds, and the blossoms on the bough—

And this wuz yit 'fore brekfust, with the sun out at his best,

And hosses kickin' in the barn—and dry enough to plow.

"Cassander! O Cassander!" . . . And her only answer—
What?—

A letter, twisted round the cookstove damper, smokin' hot,

A-statin': "I wuz married on that day of all the rest,
The day my husband fetched me home—ef 'you ain't all fergot!"

"Cassander! O Cassander!" seems, altho, 'long in May,
I hear her mother callin' her—a-callin', night and day—

"Cassander! O Cassander!" allus callin', as I say,

"Cassander! O Cassander!" jes' a-callin' thataway.

*Fer them 'at's here in airliest infant stages,
It's a hard world:*

*Fer them 'at gits the knocks of boyhood's ages,
It's a mean world:*

*Fer them 'at nothin's good enough they're gittin',
It's a bad world:*

*Fer them 'at learns at last what's right and fittin',
It's a good world.*

—THE HIRED MAN.

IT'S a purty hard world you find, my child—
It's a purty hard world you find!

You fight, little rascal! and kick and squall,
And snort out medicine, spoon and all!

When you're here longer you'll change yer mind
And simmer down sort o' half-rickonciled.

But *now*—Jee!

My!-mun-nee!

It's a purty hard world, my child!

It's a purty mean world you're in, my lad—

It's a purty mean world you're in!

We know, of course, in your schoolboy-days
It's a world of too many troublesome ways

Of tryin' things over and startin' ag'in,—

Yit *your* chance beats what your *parents* had.

But *now*—Oh!

Fire-and-tow!

It's a purty mean world, my lad!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

It's a purty bad world you've struck, young chap—

It's a purty bad world you've struck—

But *study* the cards that you hold, you know,

And your hopes will sprout and your mustache grow,

And your store-clothes likely will change your luck,

And you'll rake a rich ladybird into yer lap!

But *now*—Doubt

All things out.—

It's a purty bad world, young chap!

It's a purty good world this is, old man—

It's a purty good world this is!

For all its follies and shows and lies—

It's rainy weather, and cheeks likewise,

And age, hard-hearin' and rheumatiz.—

We're not a-faultin' the Lord's own plan—

All things jest

At their best.—

It's a purty good world, old man!

156 *The Rhymes of Ironquill*

TO EUGENE F. WARE

I'VE allus held—till jest of late—

That *Poetry* and me

Got on best, not to 'sociate—

That is, *most* poetry;

But t'other day my *son-in-law*,

Milt—be'n in town to mill—

Fetch'd home a present-like, fer Ma,—

The Rhymes of Ironquill.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Milt ust to teach; and, 'course, *his* views
Ranks over *common* sense;—
That's *biased* me, till I refuse
'Most all he rickommends.—
But Ma *she* read and read along
And cried, like women will,
About that "Washerwoman's Song"
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And then she made *me* read the thing,
And found *my* specs and all:
And I jest leant back there—i jing—
My cheer ag'inst the wall—
And read and *read*, and read and *read*,
All to *myse'*f—ontil
I lit the lamp and went to bed
With Rhymes of Ironquill!

I propped *myse'*f up there, and—*durn!*—
I never shet an eye
Till daylight!—hogged the whole concern
Tee-total, mighty nigh!—
I'd sigh sometimes, and cry sometimes,
Er laugh jest fit to kill—
Clean *captured*-like with them-air rhymes
O' that-air Ironquill!

Read that-un 'bout old "Marmaton"
'At hain't be'n ever "sized"
In Song before—and yit's rolled on
Jest same as 'postrophized!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Putt me in mind o' *our* old crick
At *Freeport*—and the *mill*—
And Hinchman's Ford—till jest *homesick*—
Them Rhymes of Ironquill!

Read that-un, too, 'bout "Game o' Whist,"
And likenin' Life to fun
Like *that*—and playin' out yer fist,
However cards is run:
And them "Tobacker-Stemmers' Song"
They sung with sich a will
Down 'mongst the misery and wrong—
In Rhymes of Ironquill.

And old John Brown, who broke the sod
Of Freedom's faller field
And sowed his *heart* there, thankin' God
Pore slaves would git the yield—
Rained his last tears fer them and us
To irrigate and till
A crop of Song as glorious
As Rhymes of Ironquill.

And—sergeant, died there in the War,
'At talked, out of his head . . .
He went "back to the Violet Star,"
I'll bet—jest like he said!—
Yer Wars kin riddle bone and flesh,
And blow out brains, and spiff
Life-blood,—but *Somepin'* lives on, fresh
As Rhymes of Ironquill.

AND THE CHARMING MISS SMITH'S EFFECT UPON HIM

THWEET Poethy! let me *lithp* forthwith,
 That I may thhing of the name of Smith—
 Which name, alath!
 In Harmony hath
 No adequate rhyme, leht you grant me thith,—
 That the thimple thibillant thound of *eth*—
 (Which to thave my thoul, I can not expreth!)
 Thuth I may thhingingly,
 Wooingly and winninggly.
 Thu—thu—thound in the name of Smith.

O give me a name that will rhyme with Smith,—
 For wild and weird ath the sthrange name ith,
 I would sthrangle a sthrain
 And a thad refrain
 Faint and sthweet ath a whithpered kissth;
 I would thhing thome thong for the mythtic mitth
 Who beareth the thingular name of Smith—
 The dathzingly brilli-ant,
 Rarely rethilliant
 Ap—pup—pellation of Smith!

O had I a name that would rhyme with Smith—
 Thome rhythmicall tincture of rethonant blith—
 Thome melody rare
 Ath the cherubth blare

THE HOOSIER BOOK

On them little trumpeths they're foolin' with—
I would thit me down, and I'd thhing like thith
Of the girl of the thingular name of Smith—

The sthrangely curiouth,

Rich and luxuriouth.

Pup—patronymic of Smith!

158

An Idiot

I 'M on'y thist a' idiot—

That's what folks calls a feller what

Ain't got no mind

Of any kind,

Ner don't know nothin' he's forgot.—

I'm one o' *them*—But I know why

The bees buzz *this* way when they fly,—

'Cause honey it gits on their wings.

Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

What's money? Hooh! it's thist a hole

Punched in a round thing 'at won't roll]

'Cause they's a string

Poked through the thing

And fastened round your neck—that's all!

Ef I could git my money off,

I'd buy whole lots o' whoopin'-cough

And give it to the boy next door

Who died 'cause he ain't got no more.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

What is it when you die? *I know,—*
You can't wake up ag'in, ner go
To sleep no more—
Ner kick, ner snore,
Ner lay and look and watch it snow;
And when folks slaps and pinches you—
You don't keer nothin' *what* they do.
No honey on the *angels'* wings!
Ain't thumbs and fingers funny things?

159 *The Hired Man's Faith in Children*

I BELIEVE *all* childern's good,
Ef they're only *understood*,—
Even *bad* ones, 'pears to me,
'S jes' as good as they kin be!

160 *"Them Old Cheery Words"*

PAP he allis ust to say,
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"
Liked to hear him thataway,
In his old split-bottomed cheer
By the fireplace here at night—
Wood all in,—and room all bright,
Warm and snug, and folks all here:
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Me and 'Lize, and Warr'n and Jess
And Eldory home fer two
Weeks' vacation; and, I guess,
Old folks tickled through and through,
Same as *we* was,—“Home onc't more
Fer another Chris'mus—shore!”
Pap 'ud say, and tilt his cheer,—
“Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!”

Mostly Pap was ap' to be
Ser'ous in his “daily walk,”
As he called it; giner'ly
Was no hand to joke er talk.
Fac's is, Pap had never be'n
Rugged-like at all—and then
Three years in the army had
He'pped to break him purty bad.

Never *flinched!* but frost and snow
Hurt his wovnd in winter. But
You bet *Mother* knowed it, though!—
Watched his feet and made him putt
On his flannen; and his knee,
Where it never healed up, he
Claimed, was “well now—mighty near—
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!”

“Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!”
Pap 'ud say, and snap his eyes. . . .
Row o' apples sputter'n' here
Round the hearth, and me and 'Lize

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Crackin' hicker'-nuts; and Warr'n
And Eldory parchin' corn;
And whole raft o' young folks here.
"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Mother tuk most comfort in
Jes' a-he'ppin' Pap: She'd fill
His pipe fer him, er his, tin
O' hard cider; er set still
And read fer him out the pile
O' newspapers putt on file
Whilse he was with Sherman—(She
Knowed the whole war-history!)

Sometimes he'd git het up some.—
"Boys," he'd say, "and you girls, too,
Chris'mus is about to come;
So, as you've a right to do,
Celebrate it! Lots has died,
Same as Him they crucified,
That you might be happy here.
Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Missed his voice last Chris'mus—missed
Them old cheery words, you know.
Mother helt up tel she kissed
All of us—then had to go
And break down! And I laughs: "Here!
'Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!'"
"Them's his very words," sobbed she,
"When he asked to marry me."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"—

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Over, over, still I hear,

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

Yit, like him, I'm goin' to smile

And keep cheerful all the while:

Allus Chris'mus *There*—And here

"Chris'mus comes but onc't a year!"

HIS PA'S ROMANCE

161

His Pa's Romance

ALL 'at I ever want to be
Is ist to be a man like Pa
When he wuz young an' married Ma!
Uncle he telled us yisterdy
Ist all about it then—'cause they,
My Pa an' Ma, wuz bofe away
To 'tend P'tracted Meetin', where
My Pa an' Ma is allus there
When all the big "Revivals" is,
An' "Love-Feasts," too, an' "Class," an' "Prayer,"
An' when's "Comoonian Servicis."
An', yes, an' Uncle said to not
To never tell *them* nor let on
Like we knowed now ist how they got
First married. So—while they wuz gone—
Uncle he telled us ever'thing—
'Bout how my Pa wuz ist a pore
Farm-boy.—He says, I tell you *what*,
Your Pa *wuz* pore! But neighbors they
All liked him—all but one old man
An' his old wife that folks all say
Nobody liked, ner never can!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes, sir! an' Uncle purt' nigh swore
About the mean old man an' way
He treat' my Pa!—'cause he's a pore
Farm-hand—but prouder 'an a king—
An' ist work' on, he did, an' wore
His old patched clo'es, ist anyway,
So he saved up his wages—then
He ist worked on an' saved some more,
An' ist worked on, ist night an' day—
Till, sir, he save' up nine er ten
Er hunnerd dollars! But he keep
All still about it, Uncle say—
But he ist thinks—an' thinks a heap!
Though what he wuz a-thinkin', Pa.
He never tell' a soul but Ma—
(Then, course, you know, he wuzn't Pa,
An', course, you know, she wuzn't Ma—
They wuz ist sweethearts, course you know);
'Cause Ma wuz ist a girl, about
Sixteen; an' when my Pa he go
A-courtin' her, her Pa an' Ma—
The very first they find it out—
Wuz maddest folks you ever saw!
'Cause it wuz her old Ma an' Pa
'At hate my Pa, an' toss their head,
An' ist raise Ned! An' her Pa said
He'd ruther see his daughter dead!
An' said she's ist a child!—an' so
Wuz Pa!—An' ef he wuz man-grown
An' only man on earth below,
His daughter shouldn't marry him
Ef he's a king an' on his throne!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Pa's chances then looked mighty slim
Fer certain, Uncle said. But he—
He never told a soul but her
What he wuz keepin' quiet fer.
Her folks ist lived a mile from where
He lived at—an' they drove past there
To git to town. An' ever' one
An' all the neighbors they liked her
An' showed it! But her folks—no, sir!—
Nobody liked her parunts none!
An' so when they shet down, you know,
On Pa—an' old man tell' him so—
Pa ist went back to work, an' she
Ist waited. An', sir! purty soon
Her folks they thought he's turned his eye
Some other way—'cause by-an'-by
They heard he'd *rented* the old place
He worked on. An' one afternoon
A neighbor, that had bu'st' a trace,
He tell' the old man they wuz signs
Around the old place that the young
Man wuz a-fixin' up the old
Log cabin some, an' he had brung
New furnichur from town; an' told
How th' old house 'uz whitewashed clean
An' sweet—wiv mornin'-glory vines
An' hollyhawks all 'round the door
An' winders—an' a bran'-new floor
In th' old porch—an' wite-new green—
An'-red pump in the old sweep-well!
An', Uncle said, when he hear tell

THE HOOSIER BOOK

O' all them things, the old man he
Ist grin' an' says, he "reckon' now
Some gal, er widder anyhow,
That silly boy he's coaxed at last
To marry him!" he says, says-ee,
"An' ef he has, 'so mote it be'!"
Then went back to the house to tell
His *wife* the news, as he went past
The smokehouse, an' then went on in
The kitchen, where his daughter she
Wuz washin', to tell *her*, an' grin
An' try to worry her a spell!
The mean old thing! But Uncle said
She ain't cry much—ist pull her old
Sunbonnet forrerd on her head—
So's old man he can't see her face
At all! An' when he s'pose he scold'
An' jaw enough, he ist clear' out
An' think he's boss of all the place!

Then Uncle say, the first you know
They's go' to be a Circus-show
In town! an' old man think he'll take
His wife an' go. An' when she say
To take their daughter, too, *she* shake
Her head like she don't *want* to go;
An' when he sees she wants to stay,
The old man takes her, anyway!
An' so she went! But Uncle he
Said she looked mighty sweet that day,
Though she wuz pale as she could be,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A-speshully a-drivin' by
Wite where her beau lived at, you know;
But out the corner of his eye
The old man watch' her; but she throw
Her pairsol 'round so she can't see
The house at all! An' then she hear
Her Pa an' Ma a-talkin' low
And kind o' laughin'-like; but she
Ist set there in the seat behind,
P'tendin' like she didn't mind.
An', Uncle say, when they got past
The young man's place, an' 'pearantly
He wuzn't home, but off an' gone
To town, the old man turned at last
An' talked back to his daughter there,
All pleasant-like, from then clean on
Till they got into town, an' where
The Circus wuz, an' on inside
O' that, an' through the crowd, on to
The very top seat in the tent
Wite next the band—a-bangin' through
A tune 'at bu'st his yeers in two!
An' there the old man scrouged an' tried
To make his wife set down, an' she
A-yellin'! But ist what she meant
He couldn't hear, ner couldn't see
Till she turned 'round an' pinte. Then
He turned an' looked—an' looked again! . . .
He ist saw neighbors ever'where—
But, sir, *his daughter* wuzn't there!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An', Uncle says, he even saw
Her beau, you know, he hated so;
An' he wuz with some other girl.
An' then he heard the Clown "Haw-haw!"
An' saw the horses wheel an' whirl
Around the ring, an' heard the zipp
O' the Ringmaster's long slim whip—
But that whole Circus, Uncle said,
Wuz all inside the old man's head!

An' Uncle said, he didn't find
His daughter all that afternoon—
An' her Ma says she'll lose her mind
Ef they don't find her purty soon!
But, though they looked all day, an' stayed
There fer the night p'formance—not
No use at all!—they never laid
Their eyes on her. An' then they got
Their team out, an' the old man shook
His fist at all the town, an' then
Shook it up at the moon ag'in,
An' said his time 'ud come, some day!
An' jerked the lines an' driv away.

Uncle, he said, he 'spect, that night,
The old man's madder yet when they
Drive past the young man's place, an' hear
A fiddle there, an' see a light
Inside, an' shadders light an' gay
A-dancin' 'crost the winder-blinds.
An' some young chaps outside yelled, "Say!
What 'pears to be the hurry—hey?"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But the old man ist whipped the lines
An' streaked past like a runaway!
An' now you'll be su'prised, I bet!—
I hardly ain't quit laughin' yet
When Uncle say, that jamboree
An' dance an' all—w'y, that's a sign
That any old man ort to see,
As plain as 8 and 1 makes 9,
That they's *a weddin'* wite inside
That very house he's whippin' so
To git apast—an', sir! the bride
There's his own daughter! Yes, an' oh!
She's my Ma now—an' young man she
Got married, he's my Pa! *Whoop-ee!*
But Uncle say to not laugh all
The laughin' yet, but please save some
To kind o' spice up what's to come!

Then Uncle say, about next day
The neighbors they begin to call
An' wish 'em well, an' say how glad
An' proud an' tickled ever' way
Their friends all is—an' how they had
The lovin' prayers of ever' one
That had homes of their own! But none
Said nothin' 'bout the home that she
Had run away from! So she sighed
Sometimes—an' wunst she purt' nigh cried.

Well, Uncle say, her old Pa, he
Ist like to died, he wuz so mad!
An' her Ma, too! But by-an'-by
They cool down some.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' 'bout a week,
She want to see her Ma so bad,
She think she'll haf to go! An' so
She coax him; an' he kiss her cheek
An' say, Lord bless her, *course* they'll go!
An', Uncle say, when they're bofe come
A-knockin' there at her old home—
W'y, first he know, the door it flew
Open, all quick, an' she's jerked in,
An', quicker still, the door's banged to
An' locked: an' crosst the winder-sill
The old man pokes a shotgun through
An' says to git! "You stold my child,"
He says; "an', now she's back, w'y, you
Clear out, this minute, er I'll kill
You! Yes, an' I 'ull kill her, too,
Ef you don't go!" An' then, all wild,
His young wife begs him please to go!
An' so he turn' an' walk'—all slow
An' pale as death, but awful still
An' ca'm—back to the gate, an' on
Into the road, where he had gone
So many times alone, you know!
An', Uncle say, a whipperwill
Holler so lonesome, as he go
On back to'rds home, he say he 'spec'
He ist 'ud like to wring its neck!
An' I ain't think he's goin' back
All by hisse'f—but Uncle say
That's what he does, an' it's a fac'!

An' 'pears-like he's gone back to *stay*—
'Cause there he stick', ist thataway,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' don't go nowheres any more,
Ner don't nobody ever see
Him set his foot outside the door—
Till 'bout five days, a boy loped down
The road, a-comin' past from town,
An' he called to him from the gate,
An' sent the old man word: He's thought
Things over now; an', while he hate
To lose his wife, he think she ought
To mind her Pa an' Ma an' do
Whatever *they* advise her to.
An' sends word, too, to come an' git
Her new things an' the furnichur
That he had special' bought fer her—
'Cause, now that they wuz goin' to quit,
She's free to ist have all of it;—
So, fer his love fer her, he say
To come an' git it, wite away.
An' spang! that very afternoon,
Here come her Ma—ist 'bout as soon
As old man could hitch up an' tell
Her "hurry back!" An' 'bout as quick
As she's drove there to where my Pa—
I mean to where her son-in-law—
Lives at, he meets her at the door
All smilin', though he's awful pale
An' trimbly—like he's ist been sick;
He take her in the house—An', 'fore
She knows it, they's a cellar-door
Shet on her, an' she hears the click
Of a' old rusty padlock! Then,
Uncle, he say, she kind o' stands

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' thinks—an' thinks—an' thinks ag'in—
An' mayby thinks of her own child
Locked up—like her! An' Uncle smiled,
An' I ist laughed an' clapped my hands!
An' there she stayed! An' she can cry
Ist all she want! an' yell an' kick
To ist her heart's content! an' try
To pry out wiv a quilting-stick!
But Uncle say he guess at last
She 'bout give up, an' holler' through
The door-crack fer to please to be
So kind an' good as send an' tell
The old man, like she want him to,
To come, 'fore night, an' set her free,
Er—they wuz rats down there! An' yell
She did, till, Uncle say, it soured
The morning's milk in the back yard!
But all the answer reached her, where
She's skeered so in the dark down there,
Wuz ist a mutterin' that she heard—
"I've sent him word!—I've sent him word!"
An' shore enough, as Uncle say,
He has "sent word!"

Well, it's plum night.
An' all the house is shet up tight—
Only one winder 'bout half-way
Raised up, you know; an' ain't no light
Inside the whole house, Uncle say.
Then, first you know, there where the team

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Stands hitched yet, there the old man stands—
A' old tin lantern in his hands
An' monkey-wrench; an' he don't seem
To make things out, a-standin' there.
He comes on to the gate an' feels
An' fumbles fer the latch—then hears
A voice that chills him to the heels—
"You halt! an' stand right where you air!"
Then, sir! my—my—his son-in-law,
There at the winder wiv his gun,
He tell the old man what he's done:
"You hold *my* wife a prisoner—
An' *your* wife, drat ye! I've got *her*!
An' now, sir," Uncle say he say,
"You ist turn round an' climb wite in
That wagon, an' drive home ag'in
An' bring my wife back wite away,
An' we'll trade then—an' not before
Will I unlock my cellar-door—
Not fer your wife's sake ner your own,
But *my* wife's sake—an' hers alone!"
An', Uncle say, it don't sound like
It's so, but yet it is!—He say,
From wite then, somepin' seem' to strike
The old man's funny-bone some way;
An', minute more, that team o' his
Went tearin' down the road *k'whiz*!
An' in the same two-forty style
Come whizzin' back! An' oh, that air
Sweet girl a-cryin' all the while,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Thinkin' about her Ma there, shet
In her own daughter's cellar, where
Ist week or so *she's* kep' house there,
She hadn't time to clean it yet!
So when her Pa an' her they git
There—an' the young man grab' an' kiss
An' hug her, till she make him quit
An' ask him where her mother is.
An' then he smile' an' try to not;
Then slow-like find th' old padlock key,
An' blow a' oat-hull out of it,
An' then stoop down there where he's got
Her Ma locked up so keerfully—
An' where, wite there, he say he thought
It *ort* to been *the old man*—though
Uncle, he say, he reckon not—
When out she bounced, all tickled so
To taste fresh air ag'in an' find
Her folks wunst more, an' grab' her child
An' cry an' laugh, an' even go
An' hug the old man; an' he wind
Her in his arms, an' laugh, an' pat
Her back, an' say he's riconciled,
In such a happy scene as that,
To swap his daughter for her Ma,
An' have so smart a son-in-law
As *they* had! "Yes, an' he's my Pa!"
I laugh' an' yell, "Hooray-hooraw!"

I AIN'T a-goin' to cry no more, no more!
 I'm got ear-ache, an' Ma can't make
 It quit a-tall;
 An' Carlo bite my rubber-ball
 An' puncture it; an' Sis she take
 An' poke' my knife down through the stable-floor
 An' loozed it—blame it all!
 But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

 An' Aunt Mame *wrote* she's comin', an' she *can't*—
 Folks is come *there!*—An' I don't care
 She *is* my Aunt!
 An' my eyes stings; an' I'm
 Ist coughin' all the time,
 An' hurts me so, an' where my side's so sore
 Grampa felt where, an' he
 Says "Mayby it's *pleurasy!*"
 But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

 An' I clumbed up an' nen falled off the fence,
 An' Herbert he ist laugh at me!
 An' my fi'-cents
 It stucked in my tin bank, an' I ist tore
 Purt' nigh by thumbnail off, a-tryin' to git
 It out—nen *smash* it!—An' it's in there yit!
 But I ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

 Oo! I'm so wickud!—An' my breath's so *hot*—
 Ist like I run an' don't res' none
 But ist run on when I ought to not;
 Yes, an' my chin

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' lips's all warpy, an' teeth's so fast,
An' 's a place in my throat I can't swaller past—
An' they all hurt so!—
An' oh, my-oh!
I'm a-startin' ag'in—
I'm a-startin' ag'in, but I *won't*, fer shore!—
I ist ain't goin' to cry no more, no more!

163

The Lisper

ELSIE MINGUS *lisps*, she does!
She lives wite acrosst from us
In Miz. Ayers'uz house 'at she
Rents part to the Mingusuz.—
Yes, an' Elsie plays wiv me.

Elsie lisps so, she can't say
Her own name, ist *anyway!*—
She says "*Elthy*"—like they wuz
Feathers on her words, an' they
Ist stick on her tongue like fuzz.

My! she's *purty*, though!—An' when
She *lisps*, w'y, she's *purty nen!*
When she telled me, wunst, her doll
Wuz so "thweet," an' I p'ten'
I lisp too,—she laugh'—'at's all!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

She don't never git mad none—
'Cause she know I'm ist in fun.—
Elsie she ain't one bit sp'iled.—
Of all childerns—ever' one—
She's the *ladylikest* child!—

My Ma *say* she is! One time
Elsie start to say the rhyme,
 "Thing a thong o' thixpenth"—*Whee!*
I ist yell! An' Ma say I'm
Unpolite as I can be!

Wunst I went wiv Ma to call
On Elsie's Ma, an' eat an' all;
 An' nen Elsie, when we've et,
An' we're playin' in the hall,
 Elsie say: It's etikett

Fer young gentlemens, like me,
Eatin' when they's *company*,
 Not to never ever crowd
Down their food, ner "thip their tea
 Ner thup thoop so awful loud!"

US CHILDERN'S all so lonesome,
We hardly want to *play*
Or skip or swing or anything,—
'Cause Betsy she's away!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

She's gone to see her people
At her old home.—But then—
Oh! every child'll jist be wild
When she's back here again!

CHORUS

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—
Woopty-dooden then!
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,
When Betsy's back again!*

She's like a mother to us,
And like a sister, too—
Oh, she's as sweet as things to eat
When all the dinner's through!

And hey! to hear her laughin'!
And ho! to hear her sing!—
To have her back is all we lack
Of havin' *everything!*

CHORUS

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—
Woopty-dooden then!
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,
When Betsy's back again!*

Oh! some may sail the northern lakes,
And some to foreign lands,
And some may seek old Nameless Creek,
Or India's golden sands;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Or some may go to Kokomo,
And some to Maokinae,—
But I'll go down to Morgantown
To fetch our Betsy back.

CHORUS

*Then it's whoopty-doopty dooden!—
Wwhopty-dooden then!
Oh! it's whoopty-doopty dooden,
When Betsy's back again!*

165

The Toy-Balloon

THEY wuz a Big Day wunst in town,
An' little Jason's Pa
Bued him a little toy-balloon,
The first he ever saw.—
An' oh! but Jase wuz *more'n* preud,
A-holdin' to the string
And scrougin' through the grea'-big crowd,
To hear the Glee Club sing.

The Glee Club it wuz goin' to sing
In old Masonic Hall;
An' Speakin', it wuz in there, too,
An' soldiers, folks an' all:
An' Jason's Pa he git a seat
An' set down purty soon,
A-holdin' little Jase, an' him
A-holdin' his balloon.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' while the Speakin' 's startin' up

An' ever'body still—

The first you know wuz little Jase

A-yellin' fit to kill!—

Nen Jason's Pa jump on his seat

An' grab up in the air,—

But little Jason's toy-balloon

Wuz clean away from there!

An' Jase he yelled; an' Jase's Pa,

Still lookin' up, clumb down—

While that-air little toy-balloon

Went bumpin' roun' an' roun'

Ag'inst the ceilin', 'way up there

Where ever'body saw,

An' *they* all yelled, an' *Jason* yelled,

An' little Jason's Pa!

But when his Pa he packed him out

A-screamin'—nen the crowd

Looked down an' hushed—till they looked up

An' howled again out loud;

An' nen the speaker, mad an' pale,

Jist turned an' left the stand,

An' all j'ined in the Glee Club—"Hail,

Columby, Happy Land!"

OLD Granny Dusk, when the sun goes down,
 Here *she* comes into thish-*yer* town!
 Out o' the wet black woods an' swamps
 In she traipses an' trails an' tromps—
 With her old sunbonnet all floppy an' brown,
 An' her cluckety shoes, an' her old black gown,
 Here *she* comes into thish-*yer* town!

Old Granny Dusk, when the bats begin
 To flap around, comes a-trompin' in!
 An' the katydids they rasp an' whir,
 An' the lightnin'-bugs all blink at *her*;
 An' the old Hop-toad turns in his thumbs,
 An' the bunglin' June-bug booms an' bums,
 An' the Bullfrog croaks, "O here *she* comes!"

Old Granny Dusk, though I'm 'feard o' you,
 Shore-fer-certain I'm sorry, too:
 'Cause you look as lonesome an' starved an' sad
 As a mother 'at's lost ever' child she had.—
 Yet never a child in thish-*yer* town
 Clings at yer hand er yer old black gown,
 Er kisses the face you're a-bendin' down.

167 *Billy Miller's Circus-Show*

AT BILLY MILLER'S Circus-Show—
 In their old stable where it's at—
 The boys pays twenty pins to go,
 An' gits their money's-worth at that!—
 'Cause Billy he can climb and chalk
 His stockin'-feet an' purt' nigh walk
 A tight-rope—yes, an' ef he fall
 He'll ketch, an' "skin a cat"—'at's all!

He ain't afeard to swing and hang
 Ist by his legs!—an' maybe stop
 An' yell "Look out!" an' nen—k-spang!—
 He'll let loose, upside-down, an' drop
 Wite on his hands! An' nen he'll do
 "Contortion-acts"—ist limber through
 As "Injarubber Mens" 'at goes
 With shore-fer-certain circus-shows!

At Billy Miller's Circus-Show
 He's got a circus-ring—an' they's
 A dressin'-room,—so's he can go
 An' dress an' paint up when he plays
 He's somepin' else;—'cause sometimes he's
 "Ringmaster"—bossin' like he please—
 An' sometimes "Ephalunt"—er "Bare-
 Back Rider," prancin' out o' there!

An' sometimes—an' the best of all!—
 He's "The Old Clown," an' got on clo'es
 All stripud,—an' white hat, all tall
 An' peakud—like in shore-'nuff shows,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' got three-cornered red-marks, too,
On his white cheeks—ist like they do!—
An' you'd ist die, the way he sings
An' dances an' says funny things!

168 *Good-By er Howdy-Do*

SAY good-by er howdy-do—
What's the odds betwixt the two?
Comin'—goin', ev'ry day—
Best friends first to go away—
Grasp of hands you'd ruther hold
Than their weight in solid gold
Slips their grip while greetin' you.—
Say good-by er howdy-do!

Howdy-do, and then, good-by—
Mixes jes' like laugh and cry;
Deaths and births, and worst and best,
Tangled their contrariest;
Ev'ry jinglin' weddin'-bell
Skerrin' up some funer'l knell.—
Here's my song, and there's your sigh.—
Howdy-do, and then, good-by!

Say good-by er howdy-do—
Jes' the same to me and you;
'Tain't worth while to make no fuss,
'Cause the job's put up on us!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some One's runnin' this concern
That's got nothin' else to learn:
Ef *He's* willin', we'll pull through—
Say good-by er howdy-do!

169

Never Talk Back

NEVER talk back! sich things is repperhensible;
A feller only hurts hisse'f that jaws a man that's
hot;

In a quarrel, ef you'll only keep your mouth shet and act
sensible,

The man that does the talkin' 'll git worsted every shot!

Never talk back to a feller that's abusin' you—

Jes' let him carry on, and rip, and snort, and swear;
And when he finds his blamin' and defamin' 's jes' amusin'
you,

You've got him clean kaffummixed,—and you want to
hold him there!

Never talk back, and wake up the whole community

And call a man a liar, over Law, er Politics.—

You can lift and land him funder and with gracefuller
impunity

With one good jolt of silence than half a dozen kicks!

Me and Mary

ALL my feelin's in the Spring
 Gits so blame contrary,
 I can't think of anything
 Only me and Mary!
 "Me and Mary!" all the time,
 "Me and Mary!" like a rhyme,
 Keeps a-dingin' on till I'm
 Sick o' "Me and Mary!"

"Me and Mary! Ef us two
 Only was together—
 Playin' like we used to do
 In the Aprile weather!"
 All the night and all the day
 I keep wishin' thataway
 Till I'm gittin' old and gray
 Jes' on "Me and Mary!"

Muddy yit along the pike
 Sence the Winter's freezin',
 And the orchard's back'ard-like
 Bloomin' out this season;
 Only heerd one bluebird yit—
 Nary robin ner tomtit;
 What's the how and why of it?
 'Spect it's "Me and Mary!"

Me and Mary liked the birds—
 That is, *Mary* sort o'
 Liked 'em first, and afterwards,
 W'y, I thought *I'd* ort 'o.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And them birds—ef Mary stood
Right here with me, like she should—
They'd be singin', them birds would,
All fer me and Mary.

Birds er not, I'm hopin' some
I can git to plowin'!
Ef the sun'll only come,
And the Lord allowin',
Guess to-morry I'll turn in
And git down to work ag'in;
This here loaferin' won't win,
Not fer me and Mary!

Fer a man that loves, like me,
And's afeard to name it,
Till some other feller, he
Gits the girl—dad-shame-it!
Wet er dry, er clouds er sun—
Winter gone er jes' begun—
Outdoor work fer me er none,
No more "Me and Mary!"

171

Fire at Night

FIRE! Fire! Ring! and ring!
Hear the old bell bang and ding!
Fire! Fire! 'way at night,—
Can't you hear?—I think you might!—
Can't you hear them-air clangin' bells?—
W'y, I can't hear nothin' else!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Fire! Ain't you 'wake at last!—
Hear them horses poundin' past—
Hear that ladder-wagon grind
Round the corner!—and, behind,
Hear the hose-cart, turnin' short,
And the horses slip and snort,
As the engine's clank-and-jar
Jolts the whole street, near and far.
Fire! Fire! Fire! Fire!
Can't you h'ist that winder higher?
La! they've all got past like "scat!" . . .
Night's as black as my old hat—
And it's rainin', too, at that! . . .
Wonder where their old fire's at!

172 *A Fall-Crick View of the Earth-quake*

I KIN ~~hump~~ my back and take the rain,
And I don't keer how she pours;
I kin keep kind o' ca'm in a thunder-storm,
No matter how loud she roars;
I hain't much skeered o' the lightnin'
Ner I hain't sich awful shakes
Afeard o' cyclones—but I don't want none
O' yer dad-burned old earthquakes!

As long as my legs keeps stiddy,
And long as my head keeps plum',
And the buildin' stays in the front lot,
I still kin whistle, *some!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But about the time the old clock
Flops off'n the mantel-shelf,
And the bureau skoots fer the kitchen,
I'm a-goin' to skoot, myself!

Plague-take! ef you keep me stabled
While any earthquakes is around!—
I'm jes' like the stock,—I'll beller
And break fer the open ground!
And I 'low you'd be as nervous,
And in jes' about my fix,
When your whole farm slides from inunder you,
And on'y the mor'gage sticks!

Now cars hain't a-goin' to kill you
Ef you don't drive 'crost the track;
Crediters never'll jerk you up
Ef you go and pay 'em back;
You kin stand all moral and mundane storms
Ef you'll on'y jes' behave—
But a' EARTHQUAKE:—well, ef it wanted you
It 'ud husk you out o' yer grave!

173

Spirits at Home

THE FAMILY

THERE was Father, and Mother, and Emmy, and
Jane,
And Lou, and Ellen, and John and me—
And Father was killed in the war, and Lou
She died of consumption, and John did too,
And Emmy she went with the pleurisy.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

THE SPIRITS

Father believed in 'em all his life—
But Mother, at first, she'd shake her head—
Till after the battle of Champion Hill,
When many a flag in the winder-sill
Had crape mixed in with the white and red!

I used to doubt 'em myself till then—
But me and Mother was satisfied
When Ellen she set, and Father came
And rapped "God Bless You!" and Mother's name,
And "The Flag's up here!" . . . And we all just
cried.

Used to come to us often, after that,
And talk to us—just as he used to do,
Pleasantest kind! And once, for John,
He said he was "lonesome, but wouldn't let on—
Fear Mother would worry, and Emmy and Lou."

But Lou was the bravest girl on earth—
For all she never was hale and strong,
She'd have her fun!—With her voice clean lost
She'd laugh and joke us that "when *she* crossed
To Father, *we'd* all come taggin' along!"

Died—just that way! And the raps was thick
That night, as they often since occur,
Extry loud! And when *Lou* got back
She said it was Father and her—and "*whack!*"
She tuk the table—and we knowed *her!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

John and Emmy, in five years more,
Both had went.—And it seemed like fate,
For the old home *it* burnt down.—But Jane
And me and Ellen we built again
The new house, here, on the old estate.

And a happier family I don't know
Of *anywheres*—unless it's *them*,—
Father, with all his love for Lou,
And her there with him, and healthy, too,
And laughin', with John and little Em.

And, first we moved in the *new* house here,
They all dropped in for a long powwow:—
“We like your buildin', of course,” Lou said,—
“But wouldn't swap with you to save your head—
For *we* live in the ghost of the old house now!”

174 *Some Christmas Youngsters*

I

THE STRENGTH OF THE WEAK

LAST Chris'mus, little Benny
L Wuzn't sick so bad,—
Now he's had the worst spell
Ever yet he had.
Ever' Chris'mus-morning, though,
He'll p'tend as if
He's asleep—an' first you know
He's got your “Chris'mus-gif'!”

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Pa he's good to *all* of us
All the time; but when,
Ever' time it's *Chris'mus*,
He's as good-again!—
'Sides our toys an' candy,
Ever' *Chris'mus*, he
Gives us all a quarter,
Certain as can be!

Pa, this morning, tiptoe' in
To make the fire, you know,
Long 'fore it's daylight,
An' all's ice an' snow!—
An' Benny holler, "*Chris'mus-gif!*"
An' Pa jump an' say,
"You'll only git a *dollar* if
You skeer me thataway!"

II

THE LITTLE QUESTIONER

Babe she's so always
Wantin' more to hear
All about *Santy Claus*,
An' says: "*Mommy dear*,
Where's *Santy's home* at
When he ain't *away*?—
An' is they *Mizzus Santy Claus*
An' *little* folks—say?—
Chris'mus, *Santy's* always *here*—
Don't *they* want him, too?
When it *ain't Chris'mus*
What does he do?"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

III

PARENTAL CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

Parunts don't git toys an' things,
Like you'd think they *ruther*.—
Mighty funny Chris'mus-gif's
Parunts gives each other!—
Pa give Ma a barrel o' flour,
An' Ma she give to Pa
The nicest dinin'-table
She know he ever saw!

MORNING

175

'A Hoosier Calendar

JANUARY

BLEAK January! Cold as fate,
And ever colder—ever keener—
Our very hair cut while we wait
By winds that clip it ever cleaner:
Cold as a miser's buried gold,
Or nether-deeps of old tradition—
Jeems January! you're a cold
Proposition!

FEBRUARY

You, February,—seem to be
Old January's understudy,
But play the part too vaudeville-y,—
With wind too moist and snow too muddy—
You overfreeze and overthaw—
Your "Hos'ler Jo"-like recitation
But hints that you're, at best, a raw
Imitation.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

MARCH

And, March, you've got no friends to spare—

Warm friends, I mean—unless coal-dealers,
Or gas-well owners, pipin' where

The piper's paid—above all spielers;

You are a month, too, of complex

Perversities beyond solution—

A sort o' "loveliest of your sex"

Institution!

APRIL

But, April, when you kind o' come

A-sa'nterin' down along our roadway,

The bars is down, and we're at home,

And you're as welcome as a show-day!

First thing we know, the sunshine falls

Spring-like, and drenches all Creation

With that-'ere ba'm the poet calls

"Inspiration."

MAY

And May!—It's warmin' jest to see

The crick thawed clear ag'in and dancin'—

'Pear-like it's tickled 'most as *me*

A-prancin' 'crosst it with my pants on!

And then to hear the bluebird whet

His old song up and lance it through you,

Clean through the boy's heart beatin' yet—

Hallylooya!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

JUNE

June—'Ll, I jest git *doped* on June!—
The trees and grass all at their greenest—
The round earth swung 'twixt sun and moon,
Jest at its—so to say—serenest—
In country,—stars and whipperwills;
In town,—all night the boys invadin'
Leadin' citizens' winder-sills,
Sair-a-nadin'.

JULY

Fish still a-bitin'—*some*; but 'most
Too hot fer anything but layin'
Jest do-less like, and watchin' clo'st'
The treetops and the squirrels playin'—
Their tail-tips switched 'bove knot and limb,
But keepin' most in sequestration—
Leavin' a big part to the im-
Magination.

AUGUST

Now when it's August—I can tell
It by a hundred signs and over;—
They is a mixed ripe-apple-smell
And mashed-down grass and musty clover;
Bee is as lazy 'most as me—
Bee-bird cats 'em—gap's his wings out
So lazy 'at I don't think he
Spits their stings out!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

SEPTEMBER

September, you appeal to all,
Both young and old, lordly and lowly;
You stuff the haymow, trough and stall,
Till horse and cow's as roly-poly
As pigs is, slopped on buttermilk
And brand, shipstuff and 'tater-peelin's—
And folks, too, feelin' fine as silk
With all their feelin's!

OCTOBER

If I'd be'n asked for my advice,
And thought the thing out, ca'm and sober—
Sizin' the months all once or twice,—
I'd la'neh'd the year out with *October*. . . .
All Nature then jest veiled and dressed
In weddin' gyarments, ornamented
With ripe-fruit-gems—and kissin' jest
New-invented!

NOVEMBER

I'm 'feared November's hopes is few
And far between!—Cold as a Monday-
Washday, er a lodge-man who
You' got to pallbear for on Sunday;
Colder and colder every day—
The fixed official time for sighin',—
A sinkin' state you jest can't stay
In, or *die* in!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

DECEMBER

December—why, of course we grin
And bear it—shiverin' every minute,
Yet warm from time the month rolls in
Till it skites out with Christmas in it;
And so, for all its coldest truths
And chill, goose-pimpled imperfections,
It wads our lank old socks with Youth's
Recollections.

176 *The Hired Man's Dog-Story*

*Twa dogs that were na thrang at hame
Forgather'd ance upon a time.*

—BURNS.

DOGS, I contend, is jes' about
Nigh human—git 'em studied out.
I hold, like us, they've got their own
Reasonin' powers 'at's theirs alone—
Same as their tricks and habits too,
Provin', by lots o' things they do,
That instinct's not the only thing
That dogs is governed by, i jing!—
And I'll say funder, on that line,
And prove it, that they's dogs a-plenty
Will show intelligence as fine
As ary ten men out o' twenty!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jevver investigate the way
Sheep-killin' dogs goes at it—hey?
Well, you dig up the facts and you
Will find, first thing, they's always *two*
Dogs goes together on that spree
O' blood and puore dog-deviltry!
And, then, they always go at night—
Mind ye, it's never in daylight,
When folks is up and wide awake,—
No self-respectin' dogs'll make
Mistakes o' judgment on that score,—
And I've knowed fifty head or more
O' slaughtered sheep found in the lot,
Next morning the old farmer got
His folks up and went out to feed,—
And every livin' soul agreed
That all night long they never heerd
The bark o' dog ner bleat o' skeered
And racin', tromplin' flock o' sheep
A-skallyhootin' roun' the pastur',
To rouse 'em from their peaceful sleep
To that heart-renderin' disaster!

Well, now, they's actchul evidence
In all these facts set forth; and hence
When, by like facts, it has been foun'
That these two dogs—colloguin' roun'
At night as thick as thieves—*by day*
Don't go together anyway,
And, 'pearantly, hain't never met
Each other; and the facts is set

THE HOOSIER BOOK

On record furdur, that these smart
Old pards in crime lives miles apart—
Which is a trick o' theirs, to throw
Off all suspicion, don't you know!—
One's a *town-dog*—belongin' to
Some good man, maybe—er to you!—
And one's a *country-dog*, er "*jay*,"
As you nickname us thataway.
Well, now!—these is the facts I' got
(And, mind ye, these *is* facts—not *guesses*)
To argy on, concernin' what
Fine reasonin' powers dogs p'sesses.

My idy is,—the dog lives in
The *town*, we'll say, runs up ag'in
The *country-dog*, some Saturday,
Under a' old farm-wagon, say,
Down at the Court-house hitchin'-rack.—
Both lifts the bristles on their back
And show their teeth and growl as though
They meant it pleasant-like and low,
In case the fight hangs fire. And they
Both wag then in a friendly way,
The town-dog sayin':—"Seems to me,
Last Dimocratic jubilee,
I seen you here in town somewhere?"
The country-dog says:—"Right you air!—
And right here's where you seen me, too,
Under this wagon, watchin' you!"
"Yes," says the town-dog,—"*and I thought*
We'd both bear watchin', like as not."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And as he yawns and looks away,
The country-dog says, "What's your lay?"
The town-dog whets his feet a spell
And yawns ag'in, and then says,—“Well,
Before I answer that—Ain't you
A Mill Crick dog, a mile er two
From old Chape Clayton's stock-farm—say?”
“Who told you?” says the jay-dog—“hey?”
And looks up, real su'prised. “I guessed,”
The town-dog says—“You tell the rest,—
How's old Chape's mutton, anyhow?—
How many of 'em's ready now—
How many's ripe enough fer use,
And how's the hot, red, rosy juice?”
“Mm!” says the country-dog, “I think
I sort o' see a little blink
O' what you mean.” And then he stops
And turns and looks up street and lops
His old wet tongue out, and says he,
Lickin' his lips, all slobbery,
“Ad-drat my melts! you're jes' my man!—
I'll trust you, 'cause I know I can!”
And then he says, “I'll tell you jes'
How things is, and Chape's carelessness
About his sheep,—fer instance, say,
To-morry Chapes'll all be 'way
To Sund'y-meetin'—and ag'in
At night,” “At night? That lets us in!—
‘Better the day’”—the town-dog says—
“‘Better the deed.’ We'll pray; Lord, yes!—
May the outpourin' grace be shed
Abroad, and all hearts comforted

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Accordin' to their lights!" says he,
"And that, of course, means you and me."
And then they both snarled, low and quiet—
Swore where they'd meet. And both stood by it!

Jes' half-past eight on Sund'y night,
Them two dogs meets,—the *town*-dog, light
O' foot, though five mile' he had spanned
O' field, beech-wood and bottom-land.
But, as books says,—we draw a veil
Over this chapter of the tale! . . .
Yit when them two infernal, mean,
Low, orn'ry whelps has left the scene
O' carnage—chased and putt to death
The last pore sheep,—they've yit got breath
Enough to laugh and joke about
The fun they've had, while they sneak out
The woods-way for the old crick where
They both plunge in and wash their hair
And rench their bloody mouths, and grin,
As each one skulks off home ag'in—
Jes' innardly too proud and glad
To keep theirselves from kind o' struttin',
Thinkin' about the fun they'd had—
When their blame wizzens needed cuttin'!

Dogs is deliber't.—They can bide
Their time till s'picious all has died.
The country-dog don't 'pear to care
Fer town no more,—he's off somewhere
When the folks whistles, as they head
The team t'rds town. As I jes' said,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Dogs is 'deliber't, don't forgit!
So this-here dog he's got the grit
To jes' deprive hisse'f o' town
For 'bout three weeks. But time rolls roun'! . . .
Same as they *first* met:—Saturday—
Same Court-house—hitch-rack—and same way
The team wuz hitched—same wagon where
The same *jay*-dog growls under there
When same *town*-dog comes loafin' by,
With the most innocentest eye
And giner'l meek and lowly style,
As though he'd never cracked a smile
In all his mortal days!—And both
Them dogs is strangers, you'd take oath!—

Both keeps a-lookin' sharp, to see
If folks is watchin'—jes' the way
They acted that first Saturday

They talked so confidentchully.
"Well"—says the town-dog, in a low
And careless tone—"Well, whatch you know?"
" '*Know?* ' " says the country-dog—"Lots more
Than some smart people knows—that's shore!"
And then, in his dog-language, he
Explains how slick he had to be
When some suspicious folks come roun'
A-tryin' to track and run him down—

Like *he'd* had anything to do
With killin' over fifty head
O' sheep! "Jes' think!—and *me*"—he said,
"And me as innocent as *you*,
That very hour, five mile' away
In this town, like you air to-day!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Ah!" says the town-dog, "there's the beauty
O' bein' *prepared* for what *may* be,
And *washin'* when you've done your duty!—
No stain o' blood on you er me
Ner wool in *our* teeth!—*Then,*" says he,
"When wicked men has wronged us so,
We ort to learn to be forgivin'—
Half the world, of course, don't know
How the other gits its livin'!"

177

Her Poet-Brother

O H! what ef little childerns all
Wuz big as parunts is!
Nen I'd join pa's Masonic Hall
An' wear gold things like his!
An' you'd "receive," like ma, an' be
My "hostuss"—An', gee-whizz!
We'd *alluz* have ice-cream, ef we
Wuz big as parunts is!

Wiv all the money mens is got—
We'd buy a *Store* wiv that,—
Ist candy, pies an' cakes, an' not
No *drygoods*—'cept a hat—
An'-plume fer *you*—an' "plug" fer me,
An' clothes like *ma's* an' *his*,
'At on'y ist fit *us*—ef we
Wuz big as parunts is!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An'—ef we had a little boy
An' girl like me an' you,—
Our Store'd keep ever' kind o' toy
They'd ever want us to!—
We'd hire "Old Kriss" to 'tend to be
The boss of all the biz
An' ist "charge" ever'thing—ef we
Wuz big as parunts is!

178 *I Got to Face Mother To-day!*

I GOT to face Mother to-day, fer a fact!—
I got to face Mother to-day!
And jes' how I'll *dare* to, an' how she will act,
Is more than a mortal can say!
But I *got* to face her—I *got* to! And so
Here's a' old father clean at the end of his row!

And Pink and Wade's gone to the farm fer her now—
And I'm keepin' house fer 'em here—
Their purty, new house—and all paid fer!—But how
Am I goin' to meet her, and clear
Up my actchully he'ppin' 'em both to elope?—
('Cause Mother wuz set—and wuz no other hope!)

I don't think it's *Wade* she's so biased ag'in',
But his *business*,—a railroadin' man
'At runs a switch-engine, day out and day in,
And's got to make hay while he can,—
It's a *dangersome* job, I'll admit,—but see what
A fine-furnished home 'at he's already got!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *Pink*—W'y, the girl wuz just pinin' away,—
So what could her old father do,
When he found her, hid-like, in a loose load of hay,
But jes' to drive on clean into
The aidge of the city, where—singular thing!—
Wade switched us away to the Squire, i jing!

Now—a-leavin' me here—they're driv off, with a cheer,
On their weddin'-trip—which is to drive
Straight home and tell Mother, and toll her back here
And surrender me, dead er alive!
So I'm waitin' here—not so blame' overly gay
As I *wuz*,—'cause I' got to face *Mother* to-day!

179 *A Little Lame Boy's Views*

ON 'Scursion-days—an' Shows—an' Fairs—
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!—
On street-cars—same as *you*—
Seems like *somebody* allus sees
I'm lame, an' takes me on their knees,
An' holds my crutches, too—
An' asts me what's my name, an' pays
My fare theirse'f—On all Big Days!

The mob all *scrowdges* you an' makes
Enough o' bluffs, fer goodness-sakes!
But none of 'em *ain't* mad—
They're only *lettin' on*.—I know;—
An' I can tell you *why* it's so:
They're all of 'em too *glad*—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They're *ever' one*, jes' glad as *me*
To be there, er they *wouldn't* be!

The man that sells the tickets snoops
My "one-er" in, but sort o' stoops
 An' grins out at me—then
Looks mean an' business-like an' sucks
His big mustache at me an' chucks
 Too much change out again:—
He's a *smooth citizen*, an' yit
He don't fool *me* one little bit!

An' then, *inside*—fer all the jam—
Folks, seems-like, all knows who I am,
 An' tips me nods an' winks;
An' even country-folks has made
Me he'p eat pie an' marmalade,
 With bottled milk fer "drinks"!—
Folks *all's* so good to me that I—
Sometimes—I nearly purt' near' *cry*.

An' all the *kids*, high-toned er pore,
Seems better than they wuz before,
 An' wants to kind o' "stand
In" with a feller—see him through
The *free* lay-out an' *sideshows*, too,
 An' do the bloomin' "grand"!
On 'Scursion-days—an' Shows an' Fairs—
They ain't no bad folks anywheres!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

180

Rabbit

I S'POSE it takes a feller 'at's be'n
Raised in a country-town, like me,
To 'preciate rabbits! . . . Eight er ten
Bellerin' boys and two er three
Yelpin' dawgs all on the trail
O' one little pop-eyed cottontail!

'Bout the first good fall o' snow—
So's you kin track 'em, don't you know,
Where they've run,—and one by one
Hop 'em up and chase 'em down
And prod 'em out of a' old bresh-pile
Er a holler log they're a-hidin' roun',
Er way eri-nunder the ricked cord-wood
Er crosstie-stack by the railroad track
'Bout a mile
Out o' sight o' the whole ding town! . . .
Well! them's times 'at I call good!

Rabbits!—w'y, as my thoughts goes back
To them old boyhood days o' mine,
I kin sic him now and see "Old Jack"
A-plowin' snow in a rabbit-track
And a-pitchin' over him, head and heels,
Like a blame' hat-rack,
As the rabbit turns fer the timber-line
Down the County Ditch through the old
corn-fields. . . .

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes, and I'll say right here to you,
Rabbits that boys has *earnt*, like that—
Skinned and hung fer a night er two
On the old back-porch where the pump's
done froze—
Then fried 'bout right, where your brekfust's at,
With hot brown gravy and shortenin' bread,—
Rabbits, like *them*—er I ort to 'a' said,
I s'pose,
Rabbits like *those*
Ain't so p'ticalar pore, I guess,
Fer *eatin'* purposes!

181

Grampa's Choice

FIRST and best of earthly joys,
I like little girls and boys:
Which of all do I like best?
Why, the one that's happiest.

182

Thinkin' Back

I'VE be'n thinkin' back, of late,
S'prisin'!—And I'm here to state
I'm suspicious it's a sign
Of age, maybe, er decline
Of my faculties,—and yit
I'm not feelin' old a bit—
Any more than sixty-four
Ain't no young man any more!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Thinkin' back's a thing 'at grows
On a feller, I suppose—
Older 'at he gits, i jack,
More he keeps a-thinkin' back!
Old as old men git to be,
Er as middle-aged as me,
Folks'll find us, eye and mind
Fixed on what we've left behind—
Rehabilitatin'-like
Them old times we used to hike
Out barefooted fer the crick,
'Long 'bout Aprile first—to pick
Out some "warmest" place to go
In a-swimmin'—*Ooh! my-oh!*
Wonder now we hadn't died!
Grate horseradish on my hide
Jes' *a-thinkin'* how cold then
That-'ere worter must 'a' be'n!

Thinkin' back—W'y, goodness me!
I kin call their names and see
Every little tad I played
With, er fought, er was afraid
Of, and so made *him* the best
Friend I had of all the rest!
Thinkin' back, I even hear
Them a-callin', high and clear,
Up the crick-banks, where they seem
Still hid in there—like a dream—
And me still a-pantin' on
The green pathway they have gone!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Still they hide, by bend er ford—
Still they hide—but, thank the Lord
(Thinkin' back, as I have said),
I hear laughin' on ahead!

183 *The Raggedy Man on Children*

CHILDERN—take 'em as they run—
You kin *bet* on ev'ry one!—
Treat 'em right and reco'nize
Human souls is all one size.

Jevver think?—the world's best men
Wears the same souls they had when
They run barefoot—'way back where
All these little children air.

Heerd a boy, not long ago,
Say his parents *sassed* him so,
He'd *correct* 'em, ef he could,—
Then be good ef *they'd* be good.

184 *'Lizabuth-Ann on Bakin'-Day*

OUR Hired Girl, when it's bakin'-day
She's out o' patience allus,
An' tells us "Hike *outdoors* an' play,
An' when the cookies's done," she'll say,
"Land sake! she'll come an' call us!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' when the little doughbowl's all
Ist heapin'-full, she'll come an' call—
Nen say, "She ruther take a switchin'
Than have a pack o' pesky childern
Trackin' round the kitchen!"

185

"Mother"

I 'M gittin' old—I know,—
It seems so long ago—
So long sence John was here!
He went so young!—our Jim
'S as old now 'most as him,—
Close on to thirty year'!

I know I'm gittin' old—
I know it by the *cold*,
From time 'at first frost flies.—
Seems like—sence John was here—
Winters is more severe;
And winter I de-spise!

And yet it seems, some days,
John's here, with his odd ways . . .
Comes soon-like from the corn-
Field, callin' "Mother" at
Me—like he called me that
Even 'fore Jim was *born*!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

When Jim come—La! how good
Was all the neighborhood!—

And Doctor!—when I heerd
Him joke John, kind o' low,
And say: Yes, folks could go—
Pa needn't be afeard!

When Jim come,—John says-'e—
A-bendin' over me

And baby in the bed—
And jes' us three,—says-'e
"Our little family!"

And that was all he said . . .

And cried jes' like a child!—
Kissed me again, and smiled,—
'Cause I was gryin' too.

And here I am *again*
A-cryin', same as then—
Yet happy through and through!

The old home's most in mind
And joys long left behind . . .

Jim's little h'istin' crawl
Acrost the floor to where
John set a-rockin' there . . .
(I'm *gittin' old*—That's all!)

I'm gittin' old—no doubt—
(*Healthy* as all git-out!)—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But,—strangest thing I do,—
I cry so *easy* now—
I cry jes' anyhow
The fool-tears wants me to!

But Jim *he* won't be told
'At "Mother" 's gittin' old! . . .
Hugged me, he did, and smiled
This morning, and bragged "*shore*"
He loved me even more
Than when he was a child!

That's *his* way; but ef *John*
Was here now, lookin' on,
He'd shorely know and see:
"But, 'Mother,' " s'pect he'd say,
"S'pose you *air* gittin' gray,
You're younger yet than *me!*"

I'm gittin' old,—because
Our young days, like they was,
Keeps comin' back—so clear,
'At little Jim, once more,
Comes h'istin' 'crost the floor!
Fer John's old rockin'-cheer!

.
O *beautiful!*—to be
A-gittin' old, like me! . . .
Hey, Jim! Come in now, Jim!
Your supper's ready, dear!
(How more, every year,
He looks and acts like *him!*)

186 *What Little Saul Got, Christmas*

US parents mostly thinks our own's
 The smartest childern out!
 But Widder Shelton's little Saul
 Beats all I know about!
 He's weakly-like—in p'int o' health,
 But strong in word and deed
 And heart and head, and snap and spunk,
 And allus in the lead!

Comes honest by it, fer his Pa—
 Afore he passed away—
 He was a leader—(Lord, I'd like
 To hear him preach to-day!)
 He led his flock; he led in prayer
 Fer spread o' Peace—and when
 Nothin' but War could spread it, he
 Was first to lead us then!

So little Saul has grit to take
 Things jes' as they occur;
 And Sister Shelton's proud o' him
 As he is proyd o' her!
 And when she "got up"—jes' fer him
 And little playmates all—
 A Chris'mus-tree—they ever'one
 Was there but little Saul.

Pore little chap was sick in bed
 Next room; and Doc was there,
 And said the childern might file past,
 But go right back to where

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The *tree* was, in the settin'-room.
And Saul jes' laid and smiled—
Ner couldn't nod, ner wave his hand,
It hurt so—Bless the child!

And so they left him there with Doc—
And warm tear of his Ma's . . .
Then—suddent-like—high over all
Their laughture and applause—
They heerd: "I don't care what you git
On your old Chris'mus-tree,
'Cause I'm got somepin' you all hain't—
I'm got the pleurisy!"

187

Goldie Goodwin

MY old Uncle Sidney *he* says it's a sign
All over the Worl', an' ten times out of nine,
He can tell by the *name* of a child ef the same
Is a good er bad youngun—*ist* knows by their name!—
So he says, "It's the vurry best sign in the Worl'
That *Goldie Goodwin* is a good little girl,"—
An' says, "First she's *gold*—then she's *good*—an' behold,
Good's 'bout 'leventy-hunnerd times *better* than *gold*!"

Symptoms

I 'M not a-workin' now!—
 I'm jes' a-layin' round
 A-lettin' *other* people plow.—
I'm cumberin' the ground! . . .
 I jes' don't *keer*!—I've done my sheer
 O' sweatin'!—Anyhow,
 In this dad-blasted weather here,
 I'm not a-workin' *now*!

The corn and wheat and all
 Is doin' well enough!—
 They' got clean on from now tel Fall
 To show what kind o' stuff
 'At's in their *own* dad-burn backbone;
 So, while the Scriptur's 'low
 Man ort to reap as he have sown—
 I'm not a-workin' now!

The grass en-nunder these—
 Here ellums 'long "Old Blue,"
 And shadders o' the sugar-trees,
 Beats farmin' quite a few!
 As feller says,—I ruther guess
 I'll make my comp'ny bow
 And *snooze* a few hours—more er less.—
 I'm not a-workin' now!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

189 "Blue-Monday" at the Shoe Shop

IN THE EARLY SEVENTIES

OH, if we had a rich boss
Who liked to have us rest,
With a dime's lift for a benchmate
Financially distressed,—
A boss that's been a "jour." himself
And ain't forgot the pain
Of restin' one day in the week,
Then back to work againe!

Chorus

*Ho, it's hard times together,
We've had 'em, you and I,
In all kinds of weather,
Let it be wet or dry;
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood
Or lay me down and die!*

Poverty compels me
To face the snow and sleet,—
For poor wife and children
Must have a crust to eat.—
The sad wail of hunger
It would drive me insane,
If it wasn't for Blue-Monday
When I git to work againe!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Chorus

*Ho, it's hard times together,
We've had 'em, you and I,
In all kinds of weather,
Let it be wet or dry;
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood
Or lay me down and die!*

Then it's stoke up the stove, Boss,
And drive off the damps :
Cut out me tops, Boss,
And lend me your clamps ;—
Pass us your tobacky
Till I give me pipe a start. . . .
Lor', Boss! how we love ye
For your warm kynd heart!

Chorus

*Ho, it's hard times together,
We've had 'em, you and I,
In all kinds of weather,
Let it be wet or dry;
But I'm bound to earn my livelihood
Or lay me down and die!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

190

It's Got to Be

“**W**HEN it's *got* to be,”—like I always say,
As I notice the years whiz past,
And know each day is a yesterday,
When we size it up, at last,—
Same as I said when my boyhood went
And I knowed *we* had to quit,—
“It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!”—
So I said “Good-by” to it.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say in a hearty way,—
“Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!”

The time just melts like a late, last snow,—
When it's *got* to be, it melts!
But I aim to keep a cheerful mind,
Ef I can't keep nothin' else!
I knowed, when I come to twenty-one,
That I'd soon be twenty-two,—
So I waved one hand at the soft young man,
And I said, “Good-by to *you*!”

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say, in a cheerful way,—
“Well, it's *got* to be.—Good-by!”

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They kep' a-goin', the years and years,
Yet still I smiled and smiled,—
For I'd said "Good-by" to my single life,
And now had a wife and child:
Mother and son and the father—one,—
Till, last, on her bed of pain,
She jes' smiled up, like she always done,—
And I said "Good-by" again.

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say, in a humble way,—
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

And then my boy—as he growed to be
Almost a man in size,—
Was more than a pride and joy to me,
With his mother's smilin' eyes.—
He gimme the slip, when the War broke out,
And followed me. And I
Never knowed till the first fight's end . . .
I found him, and then, . . . "Good-by."

It's *got* to be, and it's *goin'* to be!
So at least I always try
To kind o' say, in a patient way,
"Well, it's *got* to be. Good-by!"

I have said, "Good-by!—Good-by!—Good-by!"
With my very best good will,
All through life from the first,—and I
Am a cheerful old man still:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But it's *got* to end, and it's *goin'* to end!
And this is the thing I'll do,—
With my last breath I will laugh, O Death,
And say "Good-by" to *you!* . . .

It's *got* to be! And again I say,—
When his old scythe circles high,
I'll laugh—of course, in the kindest way,—
As I say "Good-by!—Good-by!"

191

Hoosier Spring-Poetry

WHEN ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-goin' now,—
The maple-sap a-drippin', and the buds on ever'
bough

A-sort o' reachin' up'ards all a-trimblin', ever' one,
Like 'bout a million brownie-fists a-shakin' at the sun!
The childern wants their shoes off 'fore their breakfast,
and the Spring

Is here so good-and-plenty that the old hen has to sing!—
When things is goin' *thisaway*, w'y, that's the sign, you
know,
That ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!
Old Winter's up and dusted, with his dratted frost and
snow—

The ice is out the crick ag'in, the freeze is out the ground,
And you'll see faces thawin' too ef you'll jes' look around!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The bluebird's landin' home ag'in, and glad to git the
chance,

'Cause here's where he belongs at, that's a settled circum-
stance!

And him and mister robin now's a-chunin' fer the show.
Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

The sun ain't jes' p'tendin' *now!*—The ba'm is in the
breeze—

The trees'll soon be green as grass, and grass as green as
trees;

The buds is all jes' *eechin'*, and the dogwood down the run
Is bound to bu'st out laughin' 'fore another week is done;

The bees is wakin', gap'y-like, and fumblin' fer their buzz,
A-thinkin', ever-wakefuler, of other days that wuz,—

When all the land wuz orchard-blooms and clover, don't
you know. . . .

Oh, ever'thing's a-goin' like we like to see her go!

192

Bub Says

THE moon in the sky is a custard-pie,
An' the clouds is the cream pour'd o'er it,
An' all o' the glittering stars in the sky
Is the powdered-sugar for it.

.
Johnts—he's proudest boy in town—

'Cause his Mommy she cut down

His Pa's pants fer Johnts—an' there

Is 'nuff left fer 'nother pair!

.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

One time, when her Ma was gone,
Little Elsie she put on
All her Ma's fine clothes—an' black
Grow-grain-silk, an' sealskin-sack;
Nen while she wuz flouncin' out
In the hall an' round about,
Some one knocked, an' Elsie she
Clean forgot an' run to see
Who's there at the door—an' saw
Mighty quick it wuz her Ma.
But ef she ain't saw at all,
She'd a-knowed her parasol!

Gran'pas an' Gran'mas is funniest folks!—
Don't be jolly, ner tell no jokes,
Tell o' the weather an' frost an' snow
O' that cold New Year's o' long-ago;
An' then they sigh at each other an' cough
An' talk about suddently droppin' off.

193

Perversity

YOU have more'n likely noticed,
When you *didn't* when you *could*,
That jes' the thing you *didn't* do
Was jes' the thing you *should*.

194 *Name Us no Names no More*

SING, oh, rarest of roundelays!—
 Sing the hilarity and delight
 Of our childhood's gurgling, giggling days!
 When our eyes were as twinkling-keen and bright
 And our laughs as thick as the stars at night,
 And our breasts volcanoes of pent hoo-rays!
 When we grouped together in secret mirth
 And sniggered at everything on earth—
 But specially when strange visitors came
 And we learned, for instance, that their name
 was Fishback—or Mothershead—or Philpott—
 or Dalrymple—or Fullenwider—or Applewhite—
 or Hunnicutt—or Tubbs—or Oldshoe!
"'Oldshoe!'—jeminy-jee!" thinks we—
"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"

Barefoot racers from everywhere,
 We'd pelt in over the back porch floor
 For "the settin'-room," and cluster there
 Like a clot of bees round an apple-core,
 And sleeve our noses, and pinafore
 Our smearcase-mouths, and slick our hair,
 And stare and listen, and try to look
 Like "Agnes" does in the old school-book,—
 Till at last we'd catch the visitor's name,—
 Redinhouse, Lippscomb, or Burlingame,—
 or Winkler—or Smock—or Tutewiler—or
 Daubenspeck—or Throckmorton—or Rubottom
 —or Bixler—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"'Bixler!' jeminy-jeel!" thinks we—
"Hain't that a funny name!—tee-hee-hee!"

Peace!—Let be!—Fall away!—Fetch loose!—

We can't have fun as we had fun *then!*—
Shut up, Memory!—what's the use?—

When the girls and boys of 8 and 10
Are now—well, *matronly*, or *old men*,
And Time has (so to say) "cooked our goose!"

But ah! if we only *could* have back
The long-lost laughs that we now so lack
And so vainly long for,—how—we—*could*
Naturely wake up the neigh-ber-hood,
over the still heterogenous names ever un-
rolling from the endless roster of ortho-
graphic actualities,—such names—for fur-
ther instance of good faith—simply such
names as Vanderlip—or Funkhouser—or
Smoot—or Galbreath—or Frybarger—or
Dinwiddie—or Bouslog—or Puterbaugh—
or Longnecker—or Hartpence—or Wig-
gins—or Pangborn—or Bowersox—

"*Bowersox*"! Gee!—But alas! now we
Taste salt tears in our "tee-hee-hee"!

POEMS HERE AT HOME

195 *The Poems Here at Home*

THE Poems here at Home!—Who'll write 'em down,
Jes' as they air—in Country and in Town?
Sowed thick as clods is 'crost the fields and lanes,
Er these-'ere little hop-toads when it rains!—
Who'll "voice" 'em? as I heerd a feller say
'At speechified on Freedom, t'other day,
And soared the Eagle tel, it 'peared to me,
She wasn't bigger'n a bumble-bee!

Who'll sort 'em out and set 'em down, says I,
'At's got a stiddy hand enough to try
To do 'em jestice 'thout a-foolin' some,
And headin' facts off when they want to come?—
Who's got the lovin' eye, and heart, and brain
To reco'nize 'at nothin's made in vain—
'At the Good Bein' made the bees and birds
And brutes first choice, and us-folks afterwards?

What We want, as I sense it, in the line
O' poetry is somepin' Yours and Mine—
Somepin' with live stock in it, and out-doors,
And old crick-bottoms, snags, and sycamores:
Putt weeds in—pizen-vines, and underbresh,
As well as johnny-jump-ups, all so fresh
And sassy-like!—and groun'-squir'ls,—yes, and "We,"
As sayin' is,—“We, Us and Company!”

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Putt in old Nature's sermons,—them's the best,—
And 'casion'ly hang up a hornets' nest
'At boys 'at's run away from school can git
At handy-like—and let 'em tackle it!
Let us be wrought on, of a truth, to feel
Our proneness fer to hurt more than we heal,
In ministratin' to our vain delights—
Fergittin' even insect's has their rights!

No "Ladies' Amaranth," ner "Treasury" book—
Ner "Night Thoughts," nuther—ner no "Lally Rook"!
We want some poetry 'at's to Our taste,
Made out o' truck 'at's jes' a-goin' to waste
'Cause smart folks thinks it's altogether too
Outrageous common—'cept fer me and you!—
Which goes to argy, all sich poetry
Is 'bliged to rest its hopes on You and Me.

196

Nothin' to Say

NOTHIN' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say!
Gyrls that's in love, I've noticed, giner'ly has their
way!

Yer mother did, afore you, when her folks objected to me—
Yit here I am and here you air! and yer mother—where is
she?

You look lots like yer mother: purty much same in size;
And about the same complected; and favor about the eyes:
Like her, too, about livin' here, because *she* couldn't stay;
It'll 'most seem like you was dead like her!—but I hain't
got nothin' to say!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

She left you her little Bible—writ yer name acrost the
page—

And left her ear-bobs fer you, ef ever you come of age;
I've alluz kep' 'em and gyuarded 'em, but ef yer goin'
away—

Nothin' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say!

You don't rickollect her, I reckon? No; you wasn't a year
old then!

And now yer—how old *air* you? W'y, child, not "*twenty*"!
When?

And yer nex' birthday's in Aprile? and you want to git
married that day?

I wisht yer mother was livin'!—but I hain't got nothin' to
say!

Twenty year! and as good a gyrl as parent ever found!
There's a straw ketched on to yer dress there—I'll bresh it
off—turn round.

(Her mother was jes' twenty when us two run away.)

Nothin' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say!

197 *The Absence of Little Wesley*

SENCE little Wesley went, the place seems all so
strange and still—

W'y, I miss his yell o' "Gran'pap!" as I'd miss the whip-
perwill!

And to think I ust to *scold* him fer his everlastin' noise,
When I on'y rickollect him as the best o' little boys!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I wisht a hunderd times a day 'at he'd come trompin' in,
And all the noise he ever made was twic't as loud ag'in!—
It 'u'd seem like some soft music played on some fine in-
strument,
'Longside o' this loud lonesomeness, sence little Wesley
went!

Of course the clock don't tick no louder than it ust to do—
Yit now they's times it 'pears like it 'u'd bu'st itse'f in two!
And let a rooster, suddent-like, crow som'ers clos't around,
And seems's ef, mighty nigh it, it 'u'd lift me off the
ground!

And same with all the cattle when they bawl around the
bars,

In the red o' airly morning, er the dusk and dew and stars,
When the neighbors' boys 'at passes never stop, but jes'
go on,

A-whistlin' kind o' to theirse'v's—sence little Wesley's
gone!

And then, o' nights, when Mother's settin' up on common
late,

A-bilin' pears er somepin', and I set and smoke and wait,
Tel the moon out through the winder don't look bigger'n a
dime,

And things keeps gittin' stiller—stiller—stiller all the
time,—

I've ketched myse'f a-wishin' like—as I clumb on the cheer
To wind the clock, as I hev done fer more'n fifty year—
A-wishin' 'at the time hed come fer us to go to bed,
With our last prayers, and our last tears, sence little Wes-
ley's dead!

At "The Literary"

FOLKS in town, I reckon, thinks
 They git all the fun they air
 Runnin' loose 'round!—but, 'y jinks!
 We' got fun, and fun to spare,
 Right out here amongst the ash-
 And oak-timber ever'where!
 Some folks else kin cut a dash
 'Sides town-people, don't fergit!—
 'Specially in *winter*-time,
 When they's snow, and roads is fit.
 In them circumstances I'm
 Resig-nated to my lot—
 Which putts me in mind o' what
 'S called "The Literary."

Us folks in the country sees
Lots o' fun!—Take spellin'-school;
 Er ole hoe-down jamborees;
 Er revivals; er ef you'll
 Tackle taffy-pullin's you
 Kin git fun, and quite a few!—
 Same with huskin's. But all these
 Kind o' frolics they hain't new
 By a hunderd-year' er two,
 Cipher on it as you please!
 But I'll tell you what I jest
 Think walks over all the rest—
 Anyway it suits *me* best,—
 That's "The Literary."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

First they started it—"y gee!"
Thinks-says-I, "this settle-ment
'S gittin' too high-toned fer me!"
But when all begin to jine,
And I heerd *Izory* went,
I jest kind o' drapped in line,
Like you've seen some sandy, thin,
Scrawny shoat putt fer the crick
Down some pig-trail through the thick
Spice-bresh, where the whole drove's been
'Bout six weeks 'fore he gits in!—
"Can't tell nothin'," I-says-ee,
"'Bout it tel you go and see
Their blame 'Literary'!"

Very first night I was there
I was 'p'inted to be what
They call "Critic"—so's a fair
And square jedgment could be got
On the pieces 'at was read,
And on the debate,—"Which air
Most destructive element,
Fire er worter?" Then they hed
Compositions on "Content,"
"Death," and "Botany"; and Tomps
He read one on "Dreenin' Swamps"
I p'nounced the boss, and said,
"So fur, 'at's the best thing read
In yer 'Literary'!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then they *sung* some—tel I called
Order, and got back ag'in
In the critic's cheer, and hauled
All o' the p'formers in:—
Mandy Brizendine read one
I fergit; and Doc's was "Thought";
And Sarepty's, hern was "None
Air Denied 'at Knocks"; and Daut—
Fayette Strawnse's little niece—
She got up and spoke a piece:
Then Izory she read hern—
"Best thing in the whole concern,"
I-says-ee; "now le' 's adjourn
This-here 'Literary'!"

They was some contendin'—yit
We broke up in harmony.
Road outside as white as grit,
And as slick as slick could be!—
I'd fetched 'Zory in my sleigh,—
And I had a heap to say,
Drivin' back—in fact, I driv
'Way around the old north way,
Where the Daubenspeckses live.
'Zory allus—'fore that night—
Never 'peared to feel jest right
In my company.—You see,
On'y thing on earth saved me
Was that "Literary"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

199

Down to the Capital

I' BE'N down to the Capital at Washington, D. C.,
Where Congerss meets and passes on the pensions ort
to be

Allowed to old one-legged chaps, like me, 'at sence the war
Don't wear their pants in pairs at all—and yit how proud
we are!

Old Flukens, from our deestrick, jes' turned in and tuck
and made

Me stay with him whilse I was there; and longer 'at I
stayed

The more I kep' a-wantin' jes' to kind o' git away,
And yit a-feelin' sociabler with Flukens ever' day.

You see I'd got the idy—and I guess most folks agrees—
'At men as rich as him, you know, kin do jes' what they
please;

A man worth stacks o' money, and a Congerssman and all,
And livin' in a buildin' bigger'n Masonic Hall!

Now mind, I'm not a-faultin' Fluke—he made his money
square:

We both was Forty-niners, and both bu'sted gittin' there;
I weakened and onwindlassed, and he stuck and stayed and
made

His millions; don't know what I'm worth untel my pen-
sion's paid.

But I was goin' to tell you—er a-ruther goin' to try
To tell you how he's livin' now: gas burnin' mighty nigh

THE HOOSIER BOOK

In ever' room about the house; and ever' night about,
Some blame reception goin' on, and money goin' out.

They's people there from all the world—jes' ever' kind 'at
lives,

Injuns and all! and Senators, and Ripresentatives;
And girls, you know, jes' dressed in gauze and roses I
declare,

And even old men shamblin' round and a-waltzin' with 'em
there!

And bands a-tootin' circus-tunes, 'way in some other room
Jes' chokin' full o' hothouse plants and pinies and per-
fume;

And fountains, squirtin' stiddy all the time; and statutes,
made

Out o' puore marble, 'peared-like, sneakin' round there in
the shade.

And Fluke he coaxed and begged and pled with *me* to take
a hand

And sashay in amongst 'em—crutch and all, you under-
stand;

But when I said how tired I was, and made fer open air,
He follered, and tel five o'clock we set a-talkin' there.

"My God!" says he—Fluke says to me, "I'm tireder'n you;
Don't putt up yer tobacker tel you give a man a chew.
Set back a leetle further in the shadder—that'll do;
I'm tireder'n you, old man; I'm tireder'n you.

THE HOQSIER BOOK

"You see that-air old dome," says he, "humped up ag'inst
the sky?

It's grand, first time you see it; but it changes, by and by,
And then it stays jes' thataway—jes' anchored high and dry
Betwixt the sky up yender and the achin' of yer eye.

"Night's purty; not so purty, though, as what it ust to be
When my first wife was livin'. You remember her?" says
he.

I nodded-like, and Fluke went on, "I wonder now ef she
Knows where I am—and what I am—and what I ust to be?

"That band in there!—I ust to think 'at music couldn't
wear

A feller out the way it does; but that ain't music there—
That's jes' a' *imitation*, and like ever'thing, I swear,
I hear, er see, er tetch, er taste, er tackle anywhere!

"It's all jes' *artificial*, this-'ere high-priced life of ours;
The theory, *it's* sweet enough, tel it saps down and sours.
They's no *home* left, ner *ties* o' home about it. By the
powers,
The whole thing's artificialer'n artificial flowers!

"And all I want, and could lay down and *sob* fer, is to
know

The homely things of homely life; fer instance, jes' to go
And set down by the kitchen stove—Lord! that 'u'd rest me
so,—

Jes' set there, like I ust to do, and laugh and joke, you
know.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Jes' set there, like I ust to do," says Fluke, a-startin' in,
'Peared-like, to say the whole thing over to hisse'f ag'in;
Then stopped and turned, and kind o' coughed, and stooped
and 'fumbled fer
Somepin' o' 'nuther in the grass—I guess his handkercher.

Well, sence I'm back from Washington, where I left Fluke
a-still
A-leggin' fer me, heart and soul, on that-air pension bill,
I've half-way struck the notion, when I think o' wealth and
sich,
They's nothin' much patheticker'n jes' a-bein' rich!

200

The Old Man and Jim

OLD man never had much to say—
'Ceptin' to Jim,—
And Jim was the wildest boy he had—
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him!
Never heerd him speak but once
Er twice in my life,—and first time was
When the army broke out, and Jim he went,
The old man backin' him, fer three months;
And all 'at I heerd the old man say
Was, jes' as we turned to start away,—
"Well, good-by, Jim:
Take keer of yourse'f!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Peared-like, he was more satisfied
Jes' *lookin'* at Jim
And likin' him all to hisse'f-like, see?—
'Cause he was jes' wrapped up in him!
And over and over I mind the day
The old man come and stood round in the way
While we was drillin', a-watchin' Jim—
And down at the deepo a-heerin' him say,
"Well, good-by, Jim :
Take keer of yourse'f !"

Never was nothin' about the *farm*
Disting'ished Jim ;
Neighbors all ust to wonder why
The old man 'peared wrapped up in him :
But when Cap. Biggler he writ back
'At Jim was the bravest boy we had
In the whole dern rigiment, white er black,
And his fightin' good as his farmin' bad—
'At he had led, with a bullet clean
Bored through his thigh, and carried the flag
Through the bloodiest battle you ever seen,—
The old man wound up a letter to him
'At Cap. read to us, 'at said : "Tell Jim
Good-by,
And take keer of hisse'f."

Jim come home jes' long enough
To take the whim
'At he'd like to go back in the calvery—
And the old man jes' wrapped up in him !

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jim 'lowed 'at he'd had sich luck afore,
Guessed he'd tackle her three years more.
And the old man give him a colt he'd raised,
And follered him over to Camp Ben Wade,
And laid around fer a week er so,
Watchin' Jim on dress-parade—
Tel finally he rid away,
And last he heerd was the old man say,—
 "Well, good-by, Jim :
 Take keer of yourse'f !"

Tuk the papers, the old man did,
 A-watchin' fer Jim—
Fully believin' he'd make his mark
 Some way—jes' wrapped up in him !—
And *many* a time the word 'u'd come
'At stirred him up like the tap of a drum—
At Petersburg, fer instunce, where
Jim rid right into their cannons there, .
And *tuk* 'em, and p'inted 'em t'other way,
And socked it home to the boys in gray
As they scooted fer timber, and on and on—
Jim a lieutenant, and one arm gone,
And the old man's words in his mind all day,—
 "Well, good-by, Jim :
 Take keer of yourse'f !"

Think of a private, now, perhaps,
 We'll say like Jim,
'At's clumb clean up to the shoulder-straps—
 And the old man jes' wrapped up in him !

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Think of him—with the war plum' through,
And the glorious old Red-White-and-Blue
A-laughin' the news down over Jim,
And the old man, bendin' over him—
The surgeon turnin' away with tears
'At hadn't leaked fer years and years,
As the hand of the dyin' boy clung to
His father's, the old voice in his ears,—
 "Well, good-by, Jim :
 Take keer of yourse'f !"

201 *Thoughts on the Late War*

I WAS for Union—you, ag'in' it.
'Pears like, to me, each side was winner,
Lookin' at now and all 'at's in it.
 Le' 's go to dinner.

Le' 's kind o' jes' set down together
And do some pardnership forgittin'—
Talk, say, for instunce, 'bout the weather,
 Or somepin' fittin'.

The war, you know, 's all done and ended, .
And ain't changed no p'int's o' the compass ;
Both North and South the health's jes' splendid
 As 'fore the rumpus.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The old farms and the old plantations
Still ockipies the'r old positions.
Le' 's git back to old situations
And old ambitions.

Le' 's let up on this blame', infernal
Tongue-lashin' and lap-jacket vauntin',
And git back home to the eternal
Ca'm we're a-wantin'.

Peace kind o' sort o' suits my diet—
When women does my cookin' for me;
Ther' wasn't overly much pie et
Durin' the army.

202

The Old Band

IT'S mighty good to git back to the old town, shore,
Considerin' I've be'n away twenty year and more.
Sence I moved then to Kansas, of course I see a change,
A-comin' back, and notice things that's new to me and
strange;
Especially at evening when yer new band-fellers meet,
In fancy uniforms and all, and play out on the street—
. . . What's come of old Bill Lindsey and the Saxhorn
fellers—say?

I want to hear the *old* band play.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

What's come of Eastman, and Nat Snow? And where's
War Barnett at?

And Nate and Bony Meek; Bill Hart; Tom Richa'son and
that

Air brother of him played the drum as twic't as big as
Jim;

And old Hi Kerns, the carpenter—say, what's become o'
him?

I make no doubt yer *new band* now's a *competenter*
band,

And plays their music more by note than what they play
by hand,

And stylisher and grander tunes; but somehow—*any-*
way,

I want to hear the *old* band play.

Sich tunes as "John Brown's Body" and "Sweet Alice,"
don't you know;

And "The Camels Is A-Comin'," and "John Anderson,
My Jo";

And a dozent others of 'em—"Number Nine" and
"Number 'Leven"

Was favo-rites that fairly made a feller dream o'
Heaven.

And when the boys 'u'd saranade, I've laid so still in
bed

I've even heerd the locus'-blossoms droppin' on the shed
When "Lily Dale," er "Hazel Dell," had sobbed and died
away—

. . . I want to hear the *old* band play.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yer *new* band ma'by beats it, but the *old band's* what I said—

It allus 'peared to kind o' chord with somepin' in my head;

And, whilse I'm no musicianer, when my blame' eyes is jes'

Nigh drowned out, and Mem'ry squares her jaws and sort o' says

She *won't* ner *never will* fergit, I want to jes' turn in
And take and light right out o' here and git back West ag'in

And *stay* there, when I git there, where I never haf' to say

I want to hear the *old* band play.

203 "Last Christmas Was a Year Ago"

THE OLD LADY SPEAKS

LAST Christmas was a year ago,
Says I to David, I-says-I,
"We're goin' to morning service, so
You hitch up right away: I'll try
To tell the girls jes' what to do
Fer dinner.—We'll be back by two."
I didn't wait to hear what he
Would more'n like say back to me,
But banged the stable door and flew
Back to the house, jes' plumb chilled through.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Cold! *Wooh!* how cold it was! My-oh!
Frost flyin', and the air, you know,
"Jes' sharp enough," heerd David swear,
"To shave a man and cut his hair!"
And blow and blow! and snow and snow!—
Where it had drifted 'long the fence
And 'crost the road,—some places, though,
Jes' swep' clean to the gravel, so
The goin' was as bad fer sleighs
As 'twas fer wagons,—and both ways,
'Twixt snow-drifts and the bare ground, I've
Jes' wundered we got through alive;
I hain't saw nothin', 'fore er sence,
'At beat it anywheres, I know—
Last Christmas was a year ago.

And David said, as we set out,
'At Christmas services was 'bout
As cold and wuthless kind o' love
To offer up as he knowed of;
And as fer him, he railly thought
'At the Good Bein' up above
Would think more of us—as He ought—
A-stayin' home on sich a day,
And thankin' of Him thataway!
And jawed on, in an undertone,
'Bout leavin' Lide and Jane alone
There on the place, and me not there
To oversee 'em, and p'pare
The stuffin' fer the turkey, and
The sass and all, you understand.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I've allus managed David by
Jes' sayin' *nothin'*. That was why
He'd chased Lide's beau away—'cause Lide
She'd allus take up Perry's side
When David tackled him; and so,
Last Christmas was a year ago,—
Er ruther, 'bout *a week afore*,—
David and Perry'd quarr'l'd about
Some tom-fool argyment, you know,
And Pap told him to "Jes' git out
O' there, and not to come no more,
And, when he went, to shet the door!"
And as he passed the winder, we
Saw Perry, white as white could be,
March past, onhitch his hoss, and light
A see-gyar, and lope out o' sight.
Then Lide she come to me and cried!
And I said nothin'—was no need.
And yit, you know, that man jes' got
Right out o' there's ef he'd be'n shot,
P'tendin' he must go and feed
The stock er somepin'. Then I tried
To git the pore girl pacified.

But, gittin' back to—where was we?—
Oh, yes!—where David lectered me
All way to meetin', high and low,
Last Christmas was a year ago:
Fer all the awful cold, they was
A fair attendunce; mostly, though,
The crowd was 'round the stoves, you see,
Thawin' their heels and scrougin' us.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ef 't 'adn't be'n fer the old Squire
Givin' *his* seat to us, as in
We stomped, a-fairly perishin',
And David could 'a' got no fire,
He'd jes' 'a' drapped there in his tracks:
And Squire, as I was tryin' to yit
Make room fer him, says, "No; the fac's
Is, I got to git up and git
'*Ithout* no preachin'. Jes' got word—
Trial fer life—can't be deferred!"
And out he putt!

. And all way through
The sermont—and a long one, too—
I couldn't he'p but think o' Squire
And us changed round so, and admire
His gintle ways,—to give his warm
Bench up, and have to face the storm.
And when I noticed David he
Was needin' jabbin'—I thought best
To kind o' sort o' let him rest:
'Peared-like he slep' so peacefully!
And then I thought o' home, and how
And what the gyrls was doin' now,
And kind o' prayed, 'way in my breast,
And breshed away a tear er two
As David waked, and church was through.

By time we'd "howdyed" round and shuck
Hands with neighbors, must 'a' tuck

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A half hour longer : ever' one
A-sayin' "Christmas gift!" afore
David er me—so we got none!
But David warmed up, more and more,
And got so jokey-like, and had
His sperits up, and 'peared so glad,
I whispered to him, "S'pose you ast
A passel of 'em come and eat
Their dinners with us. Gyrls's got
A full-and-plenty fer the lot
And all their kin!" So David passed
The invite round : and ever' seat
In ever' wagon-bed and sleigh
Was jes' packed, as we rode away,—
The young folks, mil'd er so along,
A-strikin' up a sleighin'-song,
Tel David laughed and yelled, you know,
And jes' whirped up and sent the snow
And gravel flyin' thick and fast—
Last Christmas was a year ago.
W'y, that-air seven-mil'd ja'nt we come—
Jes' seven mil'd scant from church to home—
It didn't 'pear, *that* day, to be
Much funder railly 'n 'bout *three*!

But I was purty squeamish by
The time home hove in sight and I
See two vehickles standin' there
Already. So says I, "*Prepare!*"
All to myse'f. And presently
David he sobered ; and says he,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Hain't that-air Squire Hanch's old Buggy," he says, "and claybank mare?" Says I, "Le' 's git in out the cold—Your company's nigh 'bout froze!" He says, "Whose sleigh's that-air, a-standin' there?" Says I, "It's no odds *whose—you jes'* Drive to the house and let us out, 'Cause we're jes' *freezin'*, nigh about!" Well, David swung up to the door, And out we piled. And first I heerd *Jane's* voice, then *Lide's*,—I thought afore I reached that gyrl I'd jes' die, shore; And *when* I reached her, wouldn't keered. Much ef I had, I was so glad, A-kissin' her through my green veil, And jes' excitin' her so bad, 'At *she* broke down *herse'f*—and Jane, *She* cried—and we all hugged again. And *David?*—David jes' turned pale!—Looked at the gyrls, and then at me, Then at the open door—and then— "Is old Squire Hanch in there?" says he. The old Squire suddently stood in The doorway, with a sneakin' grin. "Is Perry Anders in there, too?" Says David, limberin' all through, As Lide and me both grabbed him, and Perry stepped out and waved his hand And says, "Yes, Pap." And David jes' Stooped and kissed Lide, and says, "I guess Yer *mother's* much to blame as you. Ef *she* kin resk him, I kin too!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The dinner we had then hain't no
Bit better'n the one to-day
'At we'll have fer 'em. Hear some sleigh
A-jinglin' now. David, fer *me*,
I wish you'd jes' go out and see
Ef they're in sight yit. It jes' does
Me good to think, in times like these,
Lide's done so well. And David, he's
More tractabler'n what he was—
Last Christmas was a year ago.

204

Goin' to the Fair

OLD STYLE

WHEN Me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair
Ma borried Mizz Rollins-uz rigg to go there,
'Cause *our* buggy's *new*, an' Ma says, "Mercy-sake!
It wouldn't hold *half* the folks *she's* go' to take!"
An' she took Marindy, an' Jane's twins, an' Jo,
An' Aunty Van Meters-uz girls—an' old Slo'
Magee, 'at's so fat, come a-scrougin' in there,
When me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair!

The road's full o' loads-full 'ist ready to bu'st,
An' all hot, an' smokin' an' chokin' with dust;
The Wolffs an' their wagon, an' Brizentines, too—
An' horses 'ist r'ared when the toot-cars come through!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' 'way from fur off we could hear the band play,
An' peoples all there 'u'd 'ist whoop an' hooray!
An' I stood on the dash-board, an' Pa boost' me there
'Most high as the fence, when we went to the Fair!

An' when we 'uz there an' inside, we could see
Wher' the flag's on a pole wher' a show's go' to be;
An' boys up in trees, an' the grea'-big balloon
'At didn't gonod up a-tall, all afternoon!
An' a man in the crowd there gived money away—
An' Pa says "*he'd* ruther earn *his* by the day!"—
An' *he* gim-me some, an' says "ain't nothin' there
Too good fer his boy," when we went to the Fair!

Wisht The Raggedy Man wuz there, too!—but he says,
"Don't talk fairs to *me*, child! I went to one;—yes,—
An' they wuz a swing there ye rode—an' I rode,
An' a thing-um-a-jing 'at ye blowed—an' I blowed;
An' they wuz a game 'at ye played—an' I played,
An' a hitch in the same wher' ye paid—an' I paid;
An' they wuz *two* bad to one good peoples there—
Like *you* an' your *Pa* an' *Ma* went to the Fair!"

"**T**ALKIN' 'bout yer bees," says Ike,
 Speakin' slow and ser'ous-like,
"D' ever tell you 'bout old 'Bee'—
Old 'Bee' Fessler?" Ike-says-he!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Might call him a *bee-expert*,
When it come to handlin' bees,—
Roll the sleeves up of his shirt
And wade in amongst the trees
Where a swarm 'u'd settle, and—
Blam'est man on top of dirt!
Rake 'em with his naked hand
Right back in the hive ag'in,
Jes' as easy as you please!
Nary bee 'at split the breeze
Ever jabbed a stinger in
Old 'Bee' Fessler—jes' in fun,
Er in *airnest*—nary one!—
Couldn't agg one *on* to, nuther,
Ary one way er the other!

"Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,
"Made a speshyality
Jes' o' bees; and built a shed—
Len'th about a half a mild!
Had about a *thousan'* head
O' hives, I reckon—tame and wild!
Durndest buzzin' ever wuz—
Wuss'n telegraph-poles does
When they're sockin' home the news
Tight as they kin let 'er loose!
Visitors rag out and come
Clean from town to hear 'em hum,
And stop at the kivered bridge;
But wuz some 'u'd cross the ridge
Allus, and go clos'ter—so's
They could *see* 'em hum, I s'pose!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Peared-like strangers down that track
Allus met folks comin' back
Lookin' extry fat and hearty
Fer a city picnic party!

"'Fore he went to Floridy,
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he—
"Old 'Bee' Fessler couldn't bide
Childern on his place," says Ike.
"Yit, fer all, they'd climb inside
And tromp round there, keerless-like,
In their bare feet. 'Bee' could tell
Ev'ry town-boy by his yell—
So's 'at when they bounced the fence,
Didn't make no difference!
He'd jes' git down on one knee
In the grass and pat the bee!—
And, ef 't 'adn't stayed stuck in,
Fess' 'u'd set the sting ag'in,
'N' potter off, and wait around
Fer the old famillyer sound.
Allus boys there, more or less,
Scootin' round the premises!
When the buckwheat wuz in bloom,
Lawzy! how them bees 'u'd boom
Round the boys 'at crossed that way
Fer the crick on Saturday!
Never seemed to me su'prisin'
'At the sting o' bees 'uz p'izin!

"'Fore he went to Floridy,"
Ike says, "nothin' 'bout a bee

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'At old Fessler didn't know,—
W'y, it jes' 'peared-like 'at he
Knowned their language, high and low:
Claimed he told jes' by their buzz
What their wants and wishes wuz!
Peek in them-air little holes
Round the porches o' the hive—
Drat their pesky little souls!—
Could 'a' skinned the man alive!
Bore right in there with his thumb,
And squat down and scrape the gum
Outen ev'ry hole, and blow
'N' bresh the crumbs off, don't you know!
Take the roof off, and slide back
Them-air glass concerns they pack
Full o' honey, and jes' lean
'N' grabble 'mongst 'em fer the queen!
Fetch her out and *show* you to her—
Jes', you might say, *interview* her!

"Year er two," says Ike, says-he,
"'Fore he went to Floridy,
Fessler struck the theory,
Honey was the same as *love*—
You could make it day and night:
Said them bees o' his could be
Got jes' twic't the work out of
Ef a feller managed right.
He contended ef bees found
Blossoms all the year around,
He could git 'em down at once
To work all the *winter* months

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Same as *summer*. So, one fall,
When their summer's work wuz done,
'Bee' turns in and robs 'em all;
Loads the hives then, one by one,
On the cyars, and 'lowed he'd see
Ef bees loafed in *Floridy*!
Said he bet he'd know the reason
Ef *his* didn't work that season!

"And," says Ike, "it's jes'," says-he,
"Like old Fessler says to me:
'Any man kin fool a *bee*,
Git him down in *Floridy*!'
'Peared at fust, as old 'Bee' said,
Fer to kind o' turn their head
Fer a spell; but, bless you! they
Didn't lose a half a day
Altogether!—Jes' lit in
Them-air tropics, and them-air
Cacktusses a-ripen-nin',
'N' magnolyers, and sweet-peas,
'N' 'simmon and pineapple trees,
'N' ripe bananers, here and there,
'N' dates a-danglin' in the breeze,
'N' figs and reezins ev'rywhere,
All waitin' jes' fer Fessler's bees!
'N' Fessler's bees, with gaumy wings,
A-gittin' down and *whoopin'* things!—
Fessler kind o' overseein'
'Em, and sort o' '*hee-o-hecin'*'!"

"'Fore he went to *Floridy*,
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Wuzn't counted, jes' to say,
Mean er or'n'ry anyway;
On'y ev'ry 'tarnel dime
'At 'u'd pass him on the road
He'd ketch up with, ev'ry time;
And no mortal ever knowed
Him to spend a copper cent—
'Less on some fool-'speriment
With them *bees*—like that-un he
Played on 'em in Floridy.
Fess', of course, *he* tuck his ease,
But 'twuz *bilious* on the bees!
Sweat, you know, 'u'd jes' stand out
On their *forreds*—pant and groan,
And grunt round and limp about!—
And old 'Bee,' o' course, a-knowin'
'Twuzn't no fair shake to play
On them pore dumb insecks, ner
To abuse 'em thataway.
Bees has rights, I'm here to say,
And that's all they ast him fer!
Man as mean as *that*, jes' 'pears,
Could 'a' worked bees on the sheers!
Cleared big money—well, I guess,
'Bee' shipped honey, more er less,
Into ev'ry state, perhaps,
Ever putt down in the maps!

"But by time he fetched 'em back
In the spring ag'in," says Ike,
"They wuz actin' s'picious-like:
Though they 'peared to lost the track

THE HOOSIER BOOK

O' ev'rything they saw er heard,
They'd lay round the porch, and gap'
At their shadders in the sun,
Do-less like, ontel some bird
Suddently 'u'd maybe drap
In a bloomin' churry tree,
Twitterin' a tune 'at run
In their minds familiously!
They'd revive up, kind o', then,
Like they argied: 'Well, it's be'n
The most longest summer we
Ever saw er want to see!
Must be *right*, though, er *old "Bee"*
'U'd notify us!' they says-ee;
And they'd sort o' square their chin
And git down to work ag'in—
Moanin' round their honey-makin',
Kind o' like their head was achin'.
Tetchin' fer to see how they
Trusted Fessler thataway—
Him a-lazin' round, and smirkin'
To hisse'f to see 'em workin'!

"But old 'Bee,'" says Ike, says-he,—
"*Now* where is he? *Where's* he gone?
Where's the head he helt so free?
Where's his pride and vanity?
What's his hopes a-restin' on?—
Never knowed a man," says Ike,
"Take advantage of a bee,
'At affliction didn't strike
Round in that vicinity!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sinners allus suffers some,
And *old Fessler's* reck'nin' come!
That-air man to-day is jes'
Like the grass 'at Scriptur' says
Cometh up, and then turns in
And jes' gits cut down ag'in!
Old 'Bee' Fessler," Ike says-he,
"Says, last fall, says he to me—
'Ike,' says he, 'them bees has jes'
Ciphered out my or'n'riness!
Nary bee in ary swarm
On the whole endurin' farm
Won't have nothin' more to do
With a man as mean as I've
Be'n to them, last year er two!
Nary bee in ary hive
But'll turn his face away,
Like they ort, whenever they
Hear my footprints drawin' nigh!
And old 'Bee,' he'd sort o' shy
Round oneasy in his cheer,
Wipe his eyes, and yit the sap,
Spite o' all, 'u'd haf' to drap,
As he wound up: 'Wouldn't keer
Quite so much ef they'd jes' light
In and settle things up right,
Like they ort; but—blame the thing!—
'Pears-like they won't even *sting*!
Pepper me, the way I felt,
And I'd thank 'em, ev'ry welt!
And as miz'able and mean
As 'Bee' looked, ef you'd 'a' seen

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Them-air hungry eyes," says Ike,
"You'd fergive him, more'n like.

"Wisht you had 'a' knowed old 'Bee'
'Fore he went to Floridy!"

206

"Tradin' Joe"

I'M one o' these cur'ous kind o' chaps
You think you know when you don't, perhaps!
I hain't no fool—ner I don't p'tend
To be so smart I could rickommend
Myself fer a *congerssman*, my friend!—
But I'm kind o' betwixt-and-between, you know,—
One o' these fellers 'at folks calls "slow."
And I'll say jest here I'm kind o' queer
Regardin' things 'at I *see* and *hear*,—
Fer I'm *thick* o' hearin' *sometimes*, and
It's hard to git me to understand;
But other times it hain't, you bet!
Fer I don't sleep with both eyes shet!

I've swapped a power in stock, and so
The neighbors calls me "Tradin' Joe"—
And I'm goin' to tell you 'bout a trade,—
And one o' the best I ever made:

Folks has gone so fur's to say
'At I'm well fixed, in a *worldly* way,
And *bein'* so, and a *widower*,
It's not su'prisin', as you'll infer,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I'm purty handy among the sect—
Widders especially, rickollect!
And I won't deny that along o' late
I've hankered a heap fer the married state—
But some way o' 'nother the longer we wait
The harder it is to discover a mate.

Marshall Thomas,—a friend o' mine,
Doin' some in the tradin' line,
But a'most too *young* to know it all—
On'y at *picnics* er some *ball*!—
Says to me, in a banterin' way,
As we was a-loadin' stock one day,—
"You're a-huntin' a wife, and I want you to see
My girl's mother, at Kankakee!—
She hain't over forty—good-lookin' and spry,
And jest the woman to fill your eye!
And I'm a-goin' there Sund'y,—and now," says he,
"I want to take you along with *me*;
And you marry *her*, and," he says, "by 'shaw!
You'll hev me fer yer son-in-law!"
I studied a while, and says I, "Well, I'll
First have to see ef she suits my style;
And ef she does, you kin bet your life
Your mother-in-law will be my wife!"

Well, Sund'y come; and I fixed up some—
Putt on a collar—I did, by gum!—
Got down my "plug," and my satin vest—
(You wouldn't know me to see me dressed!—
But any one knows ef you got the clothes
You kin go in the crowd wher' the best of 'em goes!)

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I greeced my boots, and combed my hair
Keerfully over the bald place there;
And Marshall Thomas and me that day
Eat our dinners with Widder Gray
And her girl Han'! . . .

Well, jest a glance
O' the widder's smilin' countenance,
A-cuttin' up chicken and big pot-pies,
Would make a man hungry in Paradise!
And passin' p'serves and jelly and cake
'At would make an *angel's* appetite *ache!*—
Pourin' out coffee as yaller as gold—
Twic't as much as the cup could hold—
La! it was rich!—And then she'd say,
"Take some o' *this!*" in her coaxin' way,
Tel ef I'd been a hoss I'd 'a' *founded*, shore,
And jest dropped dead on her white-oak floor!

Well, the way I talked would 'a' done you good,
Ef you'd 'a' been there to 'a' understood;
Tel I noticed Hanner and Marshall, they
Was a-noticin' me in a cur'ous way;
So I says to myse'f, says I, "Now, Joe,
The best thing fer you is to jest go slow!"
And I simmered down, and let them do
The bulk o' the talkin' the evening through.

And Marshall was still in a talkative gait
When we left, that evening—tolable late.
"How do you like her?" he says to me;
Says I, "She suits, to a 't-y-Tee'!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And then I ast how matters stood
With him in the *opposite* neighborhood?
"Bully!" he says; "I ruther guess
I'll finally git her to say the 'yes.'
I named it to her to-night, and she
Kind o' smiled, and said '*she'd see*'—
And that's a purty good sign!" says he:
"Yes," says I, "you're ahead o' *me*!"
And then he laughed, and said, "*Go in!*"
And patted me on the shoulder ag'in.

Well, ever sense then I've been ridin' a good
Deal through the Kankakee neighborhood;
And I make it convenient sometimes to stop
And hitch a few minutes, and kind o' drop
In at the widder's, and talk o' the crop
And one thing o' 'nother. And week afore last
The notion struck me, as I drove past,
I'd stop at the place and state my case—
Might as well do it at first as last!

I felt first-rate; so I hitched at the gate,
And went up to the house; and, strange to relate,
Marshall Thomas had dropped in, *too*.—
"Glad to see you, sir, how do you do?"
He says, says he! Well—it *sounded queer*;
And when Han' told me to take a cheer,
Marshall got up and putt out o' the room—
And motioned his hand fer the *widder* to come.
I didn't say nothin' fer quite a spell,
But thinks I to myse'f, "There's a dog in the well!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Han' *she* smiled so cur'ous at me—
Says I, "What's up?" And she says, says she,
"Marshall's been at me to marry ag'in,
And I told him 'no,' jest as you come in."
Well, somepin' o' 'nother in that girl's voice
Says to me, "Joseph, here's your choice!"
And another minute her guileless breast
Was lovin'ly throbbin' ag'in' my vest!—
And then I kissed her, and heerd a smack
Come like a' echo, a-flutterin' back,
And we looked around, and in full view
Marshall was kissin' the widder, too!
Well, we all of us laughed, in our glad su'prise,
Tel the tears come *a-streamin'* out of our eyes!
And when Marsh said "'Twas the squarest trade
That ever me and him had made,"
We both shuck hands, 'y jucks! and swore.
We'd stick together ferevermore.
And old 'Squire Chipman tuck us the trip:
And Marshall and me's in pardnership!

207

Uncle William's Picture

UNCLE WILLIAM, last July,
Had his picture took.
"Have it done, of course," says I,
"Jes' the way you look!"
(All dressed up, he was, fer the
Barbecue and jubilee
The old settlers helt.) So he—
Last he had it took.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Lide she'd coaxed and begged and pled,
Sence her mother went;
But he'd cough and shake his head.
At all argyment;
Mebby clear his th'roat and say,
"What's *my* likeness 'mount to, hey,
Now with *Mother* gone away
From us, like she went?"

But we projicked round, tel we
Got it figgeréd down
How we'd git him, Lide and me,
Drivin' into town;
Bragged how well he looked and fleshed
Up around the face, and freshed
With the morning air; and breshed
His coat-collar down.

All so providential! W'y,
Now he's dead and gone,
Picture 'pears so lifelike I
Want to start him on
Them old tales he ust to tell,
And old talks so sociable,
And old songs he sung so well—
'Fore his voice was gone!

Face is sad to *Lide*, and they's
Sorrow in the eyes—
Kisses it sometimes, and lays
It away and cries.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I smooth down her hair, and 'low
He is happy, anyhow,
Bein' there with Mother now,—
Smile, and wipe my eyes.

208 *Squire Hawkins's Story*

I HAIN'T no hand at tellin' tales,
Er spinnin' yarns, as the sailors say;
Someway o' 'nother, language fails
To slide fer me in the oily way
That *lawyers* has; and I wisht it would;
Fer I've got somepin' that I call good;
But bein' only a country squire,
I've learned to listen and admire,
Ruther preferrin' to be addressed
Than talk myse'f—but I'll do my best:—

Old Jeff Thompson—well, I'll say,
Was the clos'test man I ever saw!—
Rich as cream, but the poorest pay,
And the meanest man to work fer—La!
I've knowed that man to work one "hand"—
Fer little er nothin', you understand—
From four o'clock in the morning light
Tel eight and nine o'clock at night,
And then find fault with his appetite!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He'd drive all over the neighborhood
To miss the place where a toll-gate stood,
And slip in town, by some old road
That no two men in the county knowed,
With a jag o' wood, and a sack o' wheat,
That wouldn't burn and you couldn't eat!
And the trades he'd make, 'll I jest de-clare,
Was enough to make a preacher swear!
And then he'd hitch, and hang about
Tel the lights in the toll-gate was blowed out,
And then the turnpike he'd turn in
And sneak his way back home ag'in!

Some folks hint, and I make no doubt,
That that's what wore his old wife out—
Toilin' away from day to day
And year to year, through heat and cold,
Uncomplainin'—the same old way!
The martyrs died in the days of old;
And a-clingin', too, as the martyrs done,
To one fixed faith, and her *only* one,—
Little Patience, the sweetest child
That ever wept unrickonciled,
Er felt the pain and the ache and sting
That only a mother's death can bring.

Patience Thompson!—I think that name
Must 'a' come from a power above,
Fer it seemed to fit her jest the same
As a *gaiter* would, er a fine kid glove!
And to see that girl, with all the care
Of the household on her—I de-clare

THE HOOSIER BOOK

It was *oudacious*, the work she'd do,
And the thousand plans that she'd putt through;
And sing like a medder-lark all day long,
And drownd her cares in the joys o' song;
And *laugh* sometimes tel the farmer's "hand,"
Away fur off in the fields, would stand
A-listenin', with the plow half drawn,
Tel the coaxin' echoes called him on;
And the furries seemed, in his dreamy eyes,
Like foot-paths a-leadin' to Paradise,
As off through the hazy atmosphere
The call fer dinner reached his ear.

Now *love's* as cunnin' a little thing
As a hummin'-bird upon the wing,
And as liable to poke his nose
Jest where folks would least suppose,—
And more'n likely build his nest
Right in the heart you'd leave unguessed,
And live and thrive at your expense—
At least, that's *my* experience.
And old Jeff Thompson often thought,
In his se'fish way, that the quiet John
Was a stiddy chap, as a farm-hand *ought*
To always be,—fer the airliest dawn
Found John busy—and "*easy*," too,
Whenever his *wages* would fall due!
To sum him up with a final touch,
He *eat* so little and *worked* so much,
That old Jeff laughed to hisse'f and said,
"He makes *me* money and airns his bread!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But John, fer all of his quietude,
Would sometimes drap a word er so
That none but *Patience* understood,
And none but her was *meant* to know!—
Maybe at meal-times John would say,
As the sugar-bowl come down his way,
“Thanky, no; *my* coffee’s sweet
Enough fer *me!*” with sich conceit,
She’d know at once, without no doubt,
He meant because *she* poured it out;
And smile and blush, and all sich stuff,
And ast ef it was “*strong* enough?”
And git the answer, neat and trim,
“It *couldn’t* be too ‘strong’ fer *him!*”

And so things went fer ’bout a year,
Tel John, at last, found pluck to go
And pour his tale in the old man’s ear—
And ef it had been *hot lead*, I know
It couldn’t ’a’ raised a louder fuss,
Ner ’a’ riled the old man’s temper wuss!
He jest *lit* in, and cussed and swore,
And lunged and rared, and ripped and tore,
And told John jest to leave his door,
And not to darken it no more!
But *Patience* cried, with eyes all wet,
“Remember, John, and don’t ferget,
Whatever comes, I love you yet!”
But the old man thought, in his se’fish way,
“I’ll see her married rich some day;
And *that*,” thinks he, “is money fer *me*—
And my will’s *law*, as it ought to be!”

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So when, in the course of a month er so,
A *widower*, with a farm er two,
Comes to Jeff's, w'y, the folks, you know,
Had to *talk*—as the folks'll do:
It was the talk of the neighborhood—
Patience and *John*, aind *their* affairs;—
And this old chap with a few gray hairs
Had “cut John out,” it was understood.
And some folks reckoned “*Patience*, too,
Knowed what *she* was a-goin' to do—
It was *like* her—ta! indeed!—
All *she* loved was *dollars* and *cents*—
Like old *Jeff*—and they saw no need
Fer *John* to pine at *her* negligence!”
But others said, in a *kinder* way,
They missed the songs *she* used to sing—
They missed the smiles that used to play
Over her face, and the laughin' ring
Of her glad voice—that *everything*
Of her *old* se'f seemed dead and gone,
And this was the ghost that they gazed on!

Tel finally it was noised about
There was a *weddin'* soon to be
Down at Jeff's; and the “cat was out”
Shore enough!—’Ll the *Jee-mun-nee!*
It *riled* me when John told me so,—
Fer *I* was a *friend* o' *John's*, you know;
And his trimblin' voice jest broke in two—
As a feller's voice'll sometimes do.—
And I says, says I, “Ef I know my biz—
And I think I know what *jestice* is,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I've read *some* law—and I'd advise
A man like you to wipe his eyes,
And square his jaws and start *ag'in*,
Fer jestice is a-goin' to win!"
And it wasn't long tel his eyes had cleared
As blue as the skies, and the *sun* appeared
In the shape of a good old-fashioned smile
That I hadn't seen fer a long, long while;

So we talked on fer a' hour er more,
And sunned ourselves in the open door,—
Tel a hoss-and-buggy down the road
Come a-drivin' up, that I guess John *knowed*,—
Fer he winked and says, "I'll *dessappear*—
They'd smell a mice ef they saw *me* here!"
And he thumbed his nose at the old gray mare,
And hid hisse'f in the house somewhere.

Well.—The rig drove up: and I raised my head
As old Jeff hollered to me and said
That "him and his old friend there had come
To see ef the squire was at home."
. . . I told 'em "I was; and I *aimed* to be
At every chance of a weddin'-fee!"
And then I laughed—and they laughed, too,—
Fer that was the object they had in view.
"Would I be on hands at eight that night?"
They ast; and 's-I, "You're mighty right,
I'll be on hands!" And then I bu'st
Out a-laughin' my very wu'st,—
And so did they, as they wheeled away
And drove to'rds town in a cloud o' dust.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then I shet the door, and me and John
Laughed and *laughed*, and jest *laughed* on,
Tel Mother drapped her specs, and *by*
Jeewhillikers! I thought she'd *die!*—
And she couldn't 'a' told, I'll bet my hat,
What on earth she was laughin' at!

But all o' the fun o' the tale hain't done!—
Fer a drizzlin' rain had jest begun,
And a-havin' 'bout four mile' to ride,
I jest concluded I'd better light
Out fer Jeff's and save my hide,—
Fer *it was a-goin' to storm, that night!*
So we went down to the barn, and John
Saddled my beast, and I got on;
And he told me somepin' to not ferget,
And when I left, he was *laughin'* yet.

And, 'proachin' on to my journey's end,
The great big draps o' the rain come down,
And the thunder growled in a way to lend
An awful look to the lowerin' frown
The dull sky wore; and the lightnin' glanced
Tel my old mare jest *more'n* pranced,
And tossed her head, and bugged her eyes
To about four times their natchurl size,
As the big black lips of the clouds 'ud drap
Out some oath of a thunder-clap,
And threaten on in an undertone
That chilled a feller clean to the bone!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But I struck shelter soon enough
To save myse'f. And the house was jammed
With the women-folks, and the weddin'-stuff :—
A great, long table, fairly *crammed*
With big pound-cakes—and chops and steaks—
And roasts and stews—and stumick-aches
Of every fashion, form, and size,
From twisters up to punkin-pies !
And candies, oranges, and figs,
And reezins,—all the “whilligigs”
And “jim-cracks” that the law allows
On sich occasions !—Bobs and bows
Of gigglin' girls, with corkscrew curls,
And fancy ribbons, reds and blues,
And “beau-ketchers” and “curliques”
To beat the world ! And seven o'clock
Brought old Jeff ;—and brought—*the groom*,—
With a sideboard-collar on, and stock
That choked him so, he hadn't room
To *swaller* in, er even sneeze,
Er clear his th'oat with any ease
Er comfort—and a good square cough
Would saw his Adam's apple off !

But as fer *Patience*—*My ! Oomh-oomh !*—
I never saw her look so sweet !—
Her face was cream and roses, too ;
And then them eyes o' heavenly blue
Jest made an angel all complete !
And when she split 'em up in smiles
And splintered 'em around the room,
And danced acrost and met the groom,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *laughed out loud*—It kind o' spiles
My language when I come to that—
Fer, as she laid away his hat,
Thinks I, "*The papers hid inside*
Of that said hat must make a bride
A happy one fer all her life,
Er else a *wrecked and wretched wife!*"
And, someway, then, I thought of *John*,—
Then looked towards *Patience*. . . . She was *gone!*—
The door stood open, and the rain
Was dashin' in; and sharp and plain
Above the storm we heerd a cry—
A ringin', laughin', loud "Good-by!"
That died away, as fleet and fast
A hoss's hoofs went splashin' past!
And that was all. 'Twas done that quick! . . .
You've heerd o' fellers "lookin' sick"?
I wisht you'd seen *the groom* jest then—
I wisht you'd seen them two old men,
With starin' eyes that fairly *glared*
At one another, and the scared
And empty faces of the crowd,—
I wisht you could 'a' been allowed
To jest look on and see it all,—
And heerd the girls and women bawl
And wring their hands; and heerd old Jeff
A-cussin' as he swung hisse'f
Upon his hoss, who champed his bit
As though old Nick had holt of it:
And cheek by jowl the two old wrecks
Rode off as though they'd break their necks.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And as we all stood starin' out
Into the night, I felt the brush
Of some one's hand, and turned about,
And heerd a voice that whispered, "*Hush!*—
They're waitin' in the kitchen, and
You're wanted. Don't you understand?"
Well, ef my *memory* serves me now,
I think I winked.—Well, anyhow,
I left the crowd a-gawkin' there,
And jest slipped off around to where
The back door opened, and went in,
And turned and shet the door ag'in,
And maybe *locked* it—couldn't swear,—
A woman's arms around me makes
Me liable to make mistakes,—
I read a marriage license nex',
But as I didn't have my specs
I jest *inferred* it was all right,
And tied the knot so mortal-tight
That Patience and my old friend John
Was safe enough from that time on!

Well now I might go on and tell
How all the joke at last leaked out,
And how the youngsters raised the yell
And rode the happy groom about
Upon their shoulders; how the bride
Was kissed a hunderd times beside
The one I give her,—tel she cried
And laughed untel she like to died!
I might go on and tell you all
About the supper—and the *ball*.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

You'd ought to see me twist my heel
Through jest one old Furginny reel
Afore you die! er tromp the strings
Of some old fiddle tel she sings
Some old cowtillion, don't you know,
That putts the devil in yer toe!

We kep' the dancin' up tel *four*
O'clock, I reckon—maybe more.—
We hardly heerd the thunders roar,
Er *thought* about the *storm* that blowed—
And them two fellers on the road!
Tel all at onc't we heerd the door
Bu'st open, and a voice that *swore*,—
And old Jeff Thompson tuck the floor.
He shuck hisse'f and looked around
Like some old dog about half-drowned—
His hat, I reckon, *weighed ten pound*
To say the least, and I'll say, *shore*,
His *overcoat weighed fifty more*—
The wettest man you ever saw,
To have so dry a son-in-law!

He sized it all; and Patience laid
Her hand in John's, and looked afraid,
And waited. And a stiller set
O' folks, I *know*, you never met
In any court room, where with dread
They wait to hear a verdick read.

The old man turned his eyes on me:
"And have you married 'em?" says he.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I nodded "Yes." "Well, that'll do,"
He says, "and now we're th'ough with *you*,—
You jest clear out, and I decide
And promise to be satisfied!"
He hadn't nothin' more to say.
I saw, of course, how matters lay,
And left. But as I rode away
I heerd the roosters crow fer day.

209 *The Truly Marvelous*

GIUNTS is the biggest mens they air
In all this world er anywhere!—
An' Tom Thumb he's the most little-est man,
'Cause wunst he lived in a oyshture-can!

210 *The Spoiled Child*

'**C**AUSE Herbert Graham's a' only child—
"Wuz I there, Ma?"
His parunts uz got him purt' nigh spiled—
"Wuz I there, Ma?"
Allus ever'where his Ma tells
Where *she's* bin at, little Herbert yells,
"Wuz I there, Ma?"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' when she telled us wunst when she
Wuz ist 'bout big as him an' me,
W'y, little Herbert he says, says-ee,
 "Wuz I there, Ma?"
Foolishest young-un you ever saw.—
"*Wuz I there, Ma? Wuz I there, Ma?*"

211 *The Doodle-Bugs's Charm*

WHEN Uncle Sidney he comes here—
 An' Fred an' me an' Min,—
My Ma she says she bet you yet
 The roof'll tumble in!
Fer Uncle he ist *romps* with us:
 An' wunst, out in our shed,
He telled us 'bout the Doodle-Bugs,
 An' what they'll do, he said,
Ef you'll ist holler "Doodle-Bugs!"—
 Out by our garden-bed—
"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!
 Come up an' git some bread!"

Ain't Uncle Sidney funny man?—
 "He's childish 'most as me"—
My Ma sometimes she tells him that—
 "He ac's so foolishly!"
W'y, wunst, out in our garden-path,
 Wite by the pie-plant bed,
He all sprawled out there in the dirt
 An' ist scrooched down his head,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' "Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!"

My Uncle Sidney said,—

"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!

Come up an' git some bread!"

An' nen he showed us little holes

All bored there in the ground,

An' little weenty heaps o' dust

'At's piled there all around:

An' Uncle said, when he's like us,

Er purt' nigh big as Fred,

That wuz the Doodle-Bugs's Charm—

To call 'em up, he said:—

"Doodle! Doodle! Doodle-Bugs!"

An' they'd poke out their head—

"Doodle-Bugs! Doodle-Bugs!

Come up an' git some bread!"

212

Little Cousin Jasper

LITTLE Cousin Jasper, he
Don't live in this town, like me,—
He lives 'way to Rensselaer,
An' ist comes to visit here.

He says 'at our court-house square
Ain't nigh big as theirn is there!—
He says their town's big as four
Er five towns like this, an' more!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He says ef his folks moved here
He'd cry to leave Rensselaer—
'Cause they's prairies there, an' lakes,
An' wile-ducks an' rattlesnakes!

Yes, 'n' little Jasper's Pa
Shoots most things you ever saw!—
Wunst he shot a deer, one day,
'At swummed off an' got away.

Little Cousin Jasper went
An' camped out wunst in a tent
Wiv his Pa, an' helt his gun
While he kilt a turrapun.

An' when his Ma heerd o' that,
An' more things his Pa's bin at,
She says, "Yes, 'n' he'll git shot
'Fore he's man-grown, like as not!"

An' they's mussrats there, an' minks,
An' di-dippers, an' chee-winks,—
Yes, 'n' cal'mus-root you chew
All up an' 't 'on't pizen you!

An', in town, 's a flag-pole there—
Highest one 'at's anywhere
In this world!—wite in the street
Where the big mass-meetin's meet.

Yes, 'n' Jasper he says they
Got a brass band there, an' play.
On it, an' march up an' down
An' all over round the town!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Wisht our town ain't like it is!—

Wisht it's ist as big as his!

Wisht 'at *his* folks they'd move *here*,

An' *we'd* move to Rensselaer!

213

The Bee-Bag

WHEN I was ist a Brownie—a weenty-teenty
Brownie—

Long afore I got to be like Childerns is to-day,—

My good old Brownie granny gimme sweeter thing 'an
can'y—

An' 'at's my little bee-bag the Fairies stold away!

O my little bee-bag—

My little funny bee-bag—

My little honey bee-bag

The Fairies stold away!

One time when I bin swung in wiv annuver Brownie
young-un

An' lef' sleepin' in a pea-pod while our parunts went to
play,

I waked up ist a-cryin' an' a-sobbin' an' a-sighin'

Fer my little funny bee-bag the Fairies stold away!

O my little bee-bag—

My little funny bee-bag—

My little honey bee-bag

The Fairies stold away!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

It's awful much bewilder'n', but 'at's why I'm a *Childern*,
Ner goin' to git to be no more a Brownie sence that day!
My parunts, so imprudent, lef' me sleepin' when they
shouldn't!

An' I want my little bee-bag the Fairies stold away!

O my little bee-bag—

My little funny bee-bag—

My little honey bee-bag

The Fairies stold away!

214 'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset

'MONGST the Hills o' Somerset
Wisht I was a-roamin' yet!

My feet won't get usen to
These low lands I'm trompin' through.
Wisht I could go back there, and
Stroke the long grass with my hand,
Kind o' like my sweetheart's hair
Smoothed out underneath it there!
Wisht I could set eyes once more
On our shadders, on before,
Climbin', in the airy dawn,
Up the slopes 'at love growed on
Natchurl as the violet
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

How 't 'u'd rest a man like me
Jes' fer 'bout an hour to be

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Up there where the morning air
Could reach out and ketch me there!—
Snatch my breath away, and then
Rensh and give it back again
Fresh as dew, and smellin' of
The old pinks I ust to love,
An a-flavor'n' ever' breeze
With mixt hints o' mulberries
And May-apples, from the thick
Bottom-lands along the crick
Where the fish bit, dry er wet,
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Like a livin' pictur' things
All comes back: the bluebird swings
In the maple, tongue and bill
Trillin' glory fit to kill!
In the orchard, jay and bee
Ripens the first pears fer me,
And the "Prince's Harvest" they
Tumble to me where I lay
In the clover, provin' still
"A boy's will is the wind's will."
Clean fergot is time, and care,
And thick hearin', and gray hair—
But they's nothin' I fergot
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

Middle-aged—to be edzact,
Very middle-aged, in fact,—
Yet a-thinkin' back to then,
I'm the same wild boy again!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

There's the dear old home once more,
And there's Mother at the door—
Dead, I know, fer thirty year',
Yet she's singin', and I hear;
And there's Jo, and Mary Jane,
And Pap, comin' up the lane!
Dusk's a-fallin'; and the dew,
'Pears like, it's a-fallin' too—
Dreamin' we're all livin' yet
'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset!

215

Old John Henry

OLD John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff—
Old John Henry—
He's tough, I reckon,—but none too tough—
Too tough though's better than not enough!
Says old John Henry.
He does his best, and when his best's bad,
He don't fret none, ner he don't git sad—
He simply 'lows it's the best he had:
Old John Henry!

His doctern's jes' o' the plainest brand—
Old John Henry—
A smilin' face and a hearty hand
'S religen 'at all folks understand,
Says old John Henry.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He's stove up some with the rhumatiz,
And they hain't no shine on them shoes o' his,
And his hair hain't cut—but his eye-teeth is :
Old John Henry !

He feeds hisse'f when the stock's all fed—
Old John Henry—
And sleeps like a babe when he goes to bed—
And dreams o' Heaven and home-made bread,
Says old John Henry.
He hain't refined as he'd ort to be
To fit the statutes o' poetry,
Ner his clothes don't fit him—but *he fits me* :
Old John Henry !

216

Scotty

SCOTTY'S dead.—Of course he is !
Jes' that same old luck of his !—
Ever sence we went cahoots
He's be'n first, you bet yer boots !
When our schoolin' first begun,
Got two whippin's to my one :
Stold and smoked the first cigar :
Stood up first before the bar,
Takin' whisky-straight—and me
Wastin' time on "blackberry" !
Beat me in the Army, too,
And clean on the whole way through !—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

In more scrapes around the camp,
And more troubles, on the tramp:
Fought and fell there by my side
With more bullets in his hide,
And more glory in the cause,—
That's the kind o' man *he* was!
Luck liked Scotty more'n me.—
I got married: Scotty, he
Never even would *apply*
Fer the pension-money I
Had to beg of "Uncle Sam"—
That's the kind o' cuss *I* am!—
Scotty allus first and best—
Me the last and ornriest!
Yit fer all that's said and done—
All the battles fought and won—
We hain't prospered, him ner me—
Both as pore as pore could be,—
Though we've allus, up tel now,
Stuck together anyhow—
Scotty allus, as I've said,
Luckiest—And now he's *dead!*

217

Back from Town

OLD friends allus is the best,
Halest-like and heartiest:
Knowed us first, and don't allow
We're so blame much better now!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They was standin' at the bars
When we grabbed "the kivvered kyars"
And lit out fer town, to make
Money—and that old mistake!

We thought then the world we went
Into beat "The Settlement,"
And the friends 'at we'd make there
Would beat any anywhere!—
And they *do*—fer that's their biz:
They beat all the friends they is—
'Cept the raal old friends like you
'At staid home, like *I'd* ort to!

W'y, of all the good things yit
I ain't shet of, is to quit
Business, and git back to sheer
These old comforts waitin' here—
These old friends; and these old hands
'At a feller understands;
These old winter nights, and old
Young-folks chased in out the cold!

Sing "Hard Times'll come ag'in
No More!" and neighbors all jine in!
Here's a feller come from town
Wants that-air old fiddle down
From the chimbly!—Git the floor
Cleared fer one cowntillion more!—
It's poke the kitchen fire, says he,
And shake a friendly leg with me!

218 *A Man by the Name of Bolus*

A MAN by the name of Bolus—(all 'at we'll ever know
Of the stranger's name, I reckon—and I'm kind o'
glad it's so!)—

Got off here, Christmas morning, looked 'round the town,
and then

Kind o' sized up the folks, I guess, and—went away again!

The fac's is, this man Bolus got "run in," Christmas-day;
The town turned out to see it, and cheered, and blocked the
way;

And they dragged him 'fore the Mayor—fer he couldn't er
wouldn't walk—

And socked him down fer trial—though he couldn't er
wouldn't talk!

Drunk? They was no doubt of it!—W'y, the marshal of
the town

Laughed and testified 'at he fell *up*-stairs 'stid o' *down*!

This man by the name of Bolus?—W'y, he even drapped
his jaw

And snored on through his "hearin'"—drunk as you ever
saw!

One feller spit in his boot-leg, and another 'n' drapped a
small

Little chunk o' ice down his collar,—but he didn't wake at
all!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And they all nearly split when his Honor said, in one of his witty ways,
To "chalk it down fer him, 'Called away—be back in thirty days!'"

That's where this man named Bolus slid, kind o' like in a fit,
Flat on the floor; and—drat my ears! I hear 'em a-laughin' yit!
Somebody fetched Doc Sifers from jes' acrost the hall—
And all Doc said was, "Morphine! We're too late!" and that's all!

That's how they found his name out—piece of a letter 'at read:
"Your wife has lost her reason, and little Nathan's dead—
Come ef you kin,—fergive *her*—but, Bolus, as fer *me*,
This hour I send a bullet through where my heart *ort* to be!"

Man by the name of Bolus!—As his revilers broke
Fer the open air, 'peared like, to me, I heerd a voice 'at spoke—

*Man by the name of Bolus! git up from where you lay—
Git up and smile white at 'em, with your hands crossed thataway!*

Cuored o' Skeerin'

'LISH, you rickollect that-air
 Dad-burn skittish old bay mare
 Was no livin' with t—'at skeerd
 'T ever'thing she seed er heerd!—
 Th'owed 'Ves' Anders, and th'owed Pap,
 First he straddled her—*k-slap!*—
 And Izory—well!—th'owed *her*
 Hain't no tellin' jest how fur t—
 Broke her collar-bone—and might
 Jest 'a' kilt the gyrl outright!

Course I'd heerd 'em make their boast
 She th'ow any feller, 'most,
 Ever topped her! S' I, "I know
 One man 'at she'll never th'ow!"
 So I rid her in to mill,
 And, jest comin' round the hill,
 Met a *traction-engine!*—Ort
 Jest 'a' heerd that old mare snort,
 And lay back her yeers, and see
 Her a-tryin' to th'ow *me!*
 Course I never said a word,
 But thinks I, "My ladybird,
 You'll git cuored, right here and now,
 Of yer dy-does anyhow!"

So I stuck her—tel she'd jest
 Done her very level best;
 Then I slides off—strips the lines
 Over her fool-head, and finds

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Me a little saplin'-gad,
'Side the road :—And there we had
Our own fun!—jest wore her out!
Mounted her, and faced about,
And jest made her *nose* that-air
Little traction-engine there!

220

Home Again

I'M bin a-visitun 'bout a week
To my little Cousin's at Nameless Creek;
An' I'm got the hives an' a new straw hat,
An' I'm come back home where my beau lives at.

THE BOOK OF JOYOUS CHILDREN

221 *An Impromptu Fairy-Tale*

*When I wuz ist 'a little bit o' weenty-teenty kid
I makes up a Fairy-tale, all by myse'f, I did:—*

I

WUNST upon a time wunst
 They wuz a Fairy King,
An' ever'thing he have wuz *gold*—
 His clo'es, an' *ever'thing*!
An' all the other Fairies
 In his goldun Palace-hall
Had to hump an' hustle—
 'Cause he wuz bosst of all!

II

He have a goldun trumput,
 An' when he blow' on that,
It's a sign he want' his boots,
 Er his coat er hat:
They's a sign fer ever'thing,—
 An' all the Fairies knowed
Ever' sign, an' come a-hoppin'.
 When the King blowed!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

III

Wunst he blowed an' telled 'em all:
"Saddle up yer bees—
Fireflies is gittin' fat
An' sassy as you please!—
Guess we'll go a-huntin'!"
So they hunt' a little bit,
Till the King blowed "Supper-time,"
Nen they all quit.

IV

Nen they have a Banquet
In the Palace-hall,
An' ist et! an' et! an' et!
Nen they have a *Ball*;
An' when the *Queen* o' Fairyland
Come p'omenadin' through,
The King says an' halts her,—
"Guess I'll marry you!"

WASN'T it a funny dream!—perfectly bewild'rin'!—
Last night, and night before, and night before that,
Seemed like I saw the march o' regiments o' children,
Marching to the robin's fife and cricket's rat-ta-tat!
Lily-banners overhead, with the dew upon 'em,
On flashed the little army, as with sword and flame;
Like the buzz o' bumble-wings, with the honey on 'em,
Came an eery, cheery chant, chiming as it came:—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!
Where go the children, traveling ahead?
Some go to kindergarten; some go to day-school;
Some go to night-school; and some go to bed!

Smooth roads or rough roads, warm or winter weather,
On go the children, towhead and brown,
Brave boys and brave girls, rank and file together,
Marching out of Morning-Land, over dale and down:
Some go a-gipsying out in country places—
Out through the orchards, with blossoms on the boughs,
Wild, sweet, and pink and white as their own glad faces;
And some go, at evening, calling home the cows.

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!
Where go the children, traveling ahead?
Some go to foreign wars, and camps by the firelight—
Some go to glory so; and some go to bed!

Some go through grassy lanes leading to the city—
Thinner grow the green trees and thicker grows the dust;
Ever, though, to little people any path is pretty
So it leads to newer lands, as they know it must.
Some go to singing less; some go to list'ning;
Some go to thinking over ever-nobler themes;
Some go anhungered, but ever bravely whistling,
Turning never home again only in their dreams.

Where go the children? Traveling! Traveling!
Where go the children, traveling ahead?
Some go to conquer things; some go to try them;
Some go to dream them; and some go to bed!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

223

Elmer Brown

AWFLEST boy in this-here town
Er anywheres is Elmer Brown!
He'll mock you—yes, an' strangers, too,
An' make a face an' yell at you,—
 "Here's the way you look!"

Yes, an' wunst in School one day,
An' Teacher's lookin' wite that way,
He helt his slate, an' hide his head,
An' maked a face at *her*, an' said,—
 "Here's the way you look!"

An'-sir! when Rosie Wheeler smile
One morning at him 'crosst the aisle,
He twist his face all up, an' black
His nose wiv ink, an' whisper back,—
 "Here's the way you look!"

Wunst when his Aunt's all dressed to call,
An' kiss him good-by in the hall,
An' latch the gate an' start away,
He holler out to her an' say,—
 "Here's the way you look!"

An' when his Pa he read out loud
The speech he maked, an' feel so proud
It's in the paper—Elmer's Ma
She ketched him—wite behind his Pa,—
 "Here's the way you look!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nen when his Ma she slip an' take
Him in the other room an' shake
Him good! w'y, he don't care—no-sir!—
He ist look up an' laugh at her,—
 "Here's the way you look!"

224 *When We First Played "Show"*

WASN'T it a good time,
 Long Time Ago—
When we all were little tads
 And first played "Show"!—
When every newer day
 Wore as bright a glow
As the ones we laughed away—
 Long Time Ago!

Calf was in the back-lot;
 Clover in the red;
Bluebird in the pear-tree;
 Pigeons on the shed;
Tom a-chargin' twenty pins
 At the barn; and Dan
Spraddled out just like "The
 'Injarubber'-Man!"

Me and Bub and Rusty,
 Eck and Dunk and Sid,
'Tumblin' on the sawdust
 Like the A-rabs did;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Jamesy on the slack-rope
In a wild retreat,
Grappling back, to start again—
When he chalked his feet!

Wasn't Eck a wonder,
In his stocking-tights?
Wasn't Dunk—his leaping lion—
Chief of all delights?
Yes, and wasn't "Little Mack"
Boss of all the Show,—
Both Old Clown and Candy-Butcher—
Long Time Ago!

Sid the Bareback-Rider;
And—oh-me-oh-my!—
Bub, the spruce Ring-Master,
Stepping round so sry!—
In his little waist-and-trousers
All made in one,
Was there a prouder youngster
Under the sun!

And now—who will tell me,—
Where are they all?
Dunk's a sanatorium doctor,
Up at Waterfall;
Sid's a city street-contractor;
Tom has fifty clerks;
And Jamesy he's the "Iron Magnate"
Of "The Hecla Works."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Bub's old and bald now,
Yet still he hangs on,—
Dan and Eck and "Little Mack,"
Long, long gone!
But wasn't it a good time,
Long Time Ago—
When we all were little tads
And first played "Show"!

225

The Rambo-Tree

WHEN Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The bird sings low as the bumble bee—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The poor shote-pig he says, says he:
"When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree
There's enough for you and enough for me."—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

*For just two truant lads like we,
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree
There's enough for you and enough for me—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.*

When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—
The mole digs out to peep and see--
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The dusk sags down, and the moon swings free,
There's a far, lorn call, "Pig-gee! Pig-gee!"
And two boys—glad enough for three.—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.

*For just two truant lads like we,
When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree
There's enough for you and enough for me—
It's a long, sweet way across the orchard.*

226

Extremes

I

A LITTLE boy once played so loud
That the Thunder, up in a thunder-cloud,
Said, "Since *I* can't be heard, why, then
I'll never, never thunder again!"

II

And a little girl once kept so still
That she heard a fly on the window-sill
Whisper and say to a lady-bird,
"She's the stilliest child I ever heard!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

227

Intellectual Limitations

PARUNTS knows lots more than us,
But they don't know *all* things,—
'Cause we ketch 'em, lots o' times,
Even on little small things.

One time Winnie ask' her Ma,
At the winder, sewin',
What's the wind a-doin' when
It's a-not a-blowin'?

Yes, an' 'Del', that very day,
When we're nearly froze out,
He ask' Uncle *where* it goes
When the fire goes out?

Nen I run to ask my Pa,
That way, somepin' funny;
But I can't say ist but "Say,"
When he turn to me an' say,
"Well, what is it, Honey?"

228

Thomas the Pretender

TOMMY'S alluz playin' jokes,
An' actin' up, an' foolin' folks;
An' wunst one time he creep
In Pa's big chair, he did, one night,
An' squint an' shut his eyes bofe tight,
An' say, "Now I'm asleep."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen we knowed, an' Ma know' too,
He *ain't* asleep no more'n you!

An' wunst he clumbed on our back-fence
An' flop his arms an' nen commence
 To crow, like he's a hen;
But when he falled off, like he done,
He didn't fool us childern none,
 Ner didn't *crow* again.
An' our Hired Man, as he come by,
Says, "Tom can't *crow*, but he kin *cry*."

An' one time wunst Tom 'tend'-like he's
His Pa an' goin' to rob the bees;
 An', first he know—oh, dear!
They ist come swarmin' out o' there
An' sting him, an' stick in his hair—
 An' one got in his yeer!—
An' Uncle sigh an' say to Ma,
An' grease the welts, "Pore Pa! pore Pa!"

229 *Little Dick and the Clock*

WHEN Dicky was sick
 In the night, and the clock,
As he listened, said "Tick-
 Atty—tick-atty—tock!"
He said that *it* said,
 Every time it said "Tick,"
It said "Sick," instead,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And he *heard* it say "Sick!"
And when it said "Tick-
Atty—tick-atty—tock,"
He said it said "Sick-
Atty—sick-atty—sock!"
And he tried to *see* then,
But the light was too dim,
Yet he *heard* it again—
And 'twas *talking* to him!

And then it said "Sick-
Atty—sick-atty—sick!
You poor little Dick-
Atty—Dick-atty—Dick!
Have you got the hick-
Atties? Hi! send for Doc
To hurry up quick-
Atty—quick-atty—quock,
And heat a hot brick-
Atty—brick-atty—brock,
And rickle-ty wrap it
And clickle-ty clap it
Against his cold feet-
Al-ty—weep-atty—eepty—
There he goes, slapit-
Ty—slippaty—sleepaty!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

230

Fool-Youngens

ME an' Bert an' Minnie-Belle
Knows a joke, an' we won't tell!
No, we don't—'cause we don't know
Why we got to laughin' so;
But we got to laughin' so,
We ist kep' a-laughin'.

Wind wuz blowin' in the tree—
An' wuz only ist us three
Playin' there; ah' ever' one
Ketched each other, like we done,
Squintin' up there at the sun
Like we wuz a-laughin'.

Nothin' funny anyway;
But I laughed, an' so did they—
An' we all three laughed, an' nen
Squint' our eyes an' laugh' again:
Ner we didn't ist *p'ten'*—
We wuz *shore-'nough* laughin'.

We ist laugh' an' laugh', tel Bert
Say he *can't* quit an' it hurt.
Nen I *howl*, an' Minnie-Belle
She tear up the grass a spell
An' ist stop her yeers an' yell
Like she'd *die* a-laughin'.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Never sich fool-youngens yit!
Nothin' funny,—not a bit!—
But we laugh' so, tel we whoop'
Purt' nigh like we have the croup—
All so hoarse we'd wheeze an' whoop
An' ist *choke* a-laughin'.

231

Billy and His Drum.

HO! it's come, kids, come!
With a bim! bam! bum!
Here's little Billy bangin' on his
big bass drum!
He's a-marchin' round the room,
With his feather-duster plume
A-noddin' an' a-bobbin' with his
bim! bom! boom!

Looky, little Jane an' Jim!
Will you only look at him,
A-humpin' an' a-thumpin' with his
bam! bom! bim!
Has the Day o' Judgment come
Er the New Mi-len-nee-um?
Er is it only Billy with his
bim! bam! bum!

I'm a-comin'; yes, I am—
Jim an' Sis, an' Jane an' Sam!
We'll all march off with Billy an' his
bom! bim! bam!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Come hurrawin' as you come,
Er they'll think you're deaf-an'-dumb
Ef you don't hear little Billy an' his
big bass drum!

232

The Noble Old Elm

O BIG OLD TREE, so tall an' fine,
Where all us childern swings an' plays,
Though neighbors says you're on the line
Between Pa's house an' Mr. Gray's,—
Us childern used to almost fuss,
Old Tree, about you when we'd play.
We'd argy you belonged to us,
An' them Gray-kids the other way!

Till *Elsie*, one time *she* wuz here
An' playin' wiv us—Don't you mind,
Old Mister Tree?—an' purty near
She scolded us the hardest kind
Fer quar'llin' 'bout you thataway,
An' say *she'll* find—ef we'll keep still—
Whose tree you air *fer shore*, she say,
An' settle it *fer good*, she will!

So all keep still: An' nen she gone
An' pat the Old Tree, an' says she,—
"Whose air you, Tree?" an' nen let on
Like she's a-list'nin' to the Tree,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen she say, "It's settled,—'cause
The Old Tree says he's *all* our tree—
His *trunk* belongs to bofe your Paa,
But *shade* belongs to you an' me."

233

The Penalty of Genius

WHEN little 'Pollus Morton he's
A-go' to speak a piece, w'y, nen
The Teacher smiles an' says 'at she's
Most proud, of all her little men
An' women in her school—'cause 'Poll
He allus speaks the best of all.

An' nen she'll pat him on the cheek,
An' hold her finger up at you
Before he speak'; an' *when* he speak'
It's ist some piece *she* learn' him to!
'Cause he's her favor-ite. . . . An' she
Ain't pop'lar as she *ust* to be!

When 'Pollus Morton speaks, w'y, nen
Ist all the other childern knows
They're smart as him an' smart-again!—
Ef they *can't* speak an' got fine clo'es,
Their Parunts loves 'em more'n 'Poll-
Us Morton, Teacher, speech, an' all!

234 *The Good, Old-Fashioned People*

WHEN we hear Uncle Sidney tell
 About the long-ago
 An' old, old friends he loved so well
 When *he* was young—My-oh!—
 Us childern all wish *we'd* 'a' bin
 A-livin' then with Uncle,—so
 We could a-kind o' happened in
 On them old friends he used to know!—
 The good, old-fashioned people—
 The hale, hard-working people—
 The kindly country people
 'At Uncle used to know!

They was God's people, Uncle **says**,
 An' gloried in His name,
 An' worked, without no selfishness,
 An' loved their neighbors same
 As they was kin: An' when they biled
 Their tree-molasses, in the Spring,
 Er butchered in the Fall, they smiled
 An' sheered with all jist ever'thing!—
 The good, old-fashioned people—
 The hale, hard-working people—
 The kindly country people
 'At Uncle used to know!

He tells about 'em, lots o' times,
 Till we'd all rather hear
 About 'em than the Nurs'ry Rhymes
 Er Fairies—mighty near!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Only sometimes he stops so long
An' then talks on so low an' slow,
It's purt' nigh sad as any song
To listen to him talkin' so
Of the good, old-fashioned people—
The hale, hard-working people—
The kindly country people
'At Uncle used to know!

235

A Christmas Memory

PA he bringed me here to stay
'Til my Ma she's well.—An' nen
He's go' hitch up, Chris'mus-day,
An' come take me back again
Wher' my Ma's at! Won't I be
Tickled when he comes fer me!

My Ma an' my A'nty they
'Uz each-uvver's sisters. Pa—
A'nty telled me, th' other day,—
He comed here an' married Ma. . . .
A'nty said nen, "Go run play,
I must work now!" . . . An' I saw,
When she turn' her face away,
She 'uz cryin'.—An' nen I
'Tend-like I "run play"—an' cry.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

This-here house o' A'nty's wher'
They 'uz borned—my Ma an' her!—
An' her Ma 'uz my Ma's Ma,
An' her Pa 'uz my Ma's Pa—
Ain't that funny?—An' they're dead:
An' this-here's "th' ole Homestead."—
An' my A'nty said, an' cried,
It's mine, too, ef my Ma died—
Don't know what she mean—'cause my
Ma she's nuvver go' to die!

When Pa bringed me here 't 'uz night—
'Way dark night! An' A'nty spread
Me a piece—an' light the light
An' say I must go to bed.—
I cry not to—but Pa said,
"Be good boy now, like you telled
Mommy 'at you're go' to be!"
An', when he 'uz kissin' me
My good night, his cheek's all wet
An' taste salty.—An' he held
Wite close to me an' rocked some
An' laughed-like—'til A'nty come
Git me while he's rockin' yet.

A'nty he'p me, 'til I be
Purt' nigh strip-pud—nen hug me
In bofe arms an' lif' me 'way
Up in her high bed—an' pray
Wiv me,—'bout my Ma—an' Pa—
An' ole Santy Claus—an' Sleigh—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Reindeers an' little Drum—
Yes, an' Picture-books, "Tom Thumb,"
An' "Three Bears," an' ole "Fee-Faw"—
Yes, an' "Tweedle-Dee" an' "Dum,"
An' "White Knight" an' "Squidjicum,"
An' most things you ever saw!—
An' when A'nty kissed me, she
'Uz all cryin' over me!

Don't want Santy Claus—ner things
Any kind he ever brings!—
Don't want A'nty!—Don't want Pa!—
I ist only want my Ma!

236

"Old Bob White"

OLD Bob White's a funny bird!—
Funniest you ever heard!—
Hear him whistle,—*"Old—Bob—White!"*
You can hear him, clean from where
He's 'way 'crosst the wheat-field there,
Whistlin' like he didn't care—
"Old—Bob—White!"

Whistles alluz ist the same—
So's we won't fergit his name!—
Hear him say it?—*"Old—Bob—White!"*
There! he's whizzed off down the lane—
Gone back where his folks is stayin'—
Hear him?—There he goes again,—
"Old—Bob—White!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

When boys ever tries to git
Clos't to him—how quick he'll quit
Whistlin' his "Old—Bob—*White!*"
"*Whoo-rhoo-rhoo!*" he's up an' flew,
Ist a-purt' nigh skeerin' you
Into fits!—'At's what he'll do.—
"Old—Bob—*White!*"

Wunst our Hired Man an' me,
When we drove to Harmony,
Saw one, whistlin' "Old—Bob—*White!*"
An' we drove *wite clos't*, an' I
Saw him an' he *didn't* fly,—
Birds likes horses, an' that's why.
"Old—Bob—*White!*"

One time, Uncle Sidney says,
Wunst he rob' a Bob White's nes'
Of the eggs of "Old Bob White";
Nen he hatched 'em wiv a hen
An' her little chicks, an' nen
They ist all flewed off again!
"Old—Bob—*White!*"

237 *A Session with Uncle Sidney*

I

ONE OF HIS ANIMAL STORIES

NOW, Tudens, you sit on *this* knee—and 'scuse
It having no side-saddle on;—and, Jeems,
You sit on *this*—and don't you wobble so
And chug my old shins with your coppertoos;—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And, all the rest of you, range round someway,—
Ride on the rockers and hang to the arms
Of our old-time splint-bottom carryall!—
Do anything but *squabble* for a place,
Or push or shove or scrouge, or breathe *out loud*,
Or chew wet, or knead taffy in my beard!—
Do *anything* almost—act *anyway*,—
Only *keep* still, so I can hear myself
Trying to tell you “just one story more!”

One winter afternoon my father, with
A whistle to our dog, a shout to us—
His two boys—six and eight years old we were,—
Started off to the woods, a half a mile
From home, where he was chopping wood. We raced,
We slipped and slid; reaching, at last, the north
Side of Tharp's corn-field.—There we struck what seemed
To be a coon-track—so we all agreed:
And father, who was not a hunter, to
Our glad surprise, proposed we follow it.
The snow was quite five inches deep; and we,
Keen on the trail, were soon far in the woods.
Our old dog, “Ring,” ran nosing the fresh track
With whimpering delight, far on ahead.
After following the trail more than a mile
To northward, through the thickest winter woods
We boys had ever seen,—all suddenly
He seemed to strike *another* trail; and then
Our joyful attention was drawn to
Old “Ring”—leaping to this side, then to that,
Of a big, hollow, old oak-tree, which had
Been blown down by a storm some years before.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

There—all at once—out leapt a lean old fox
From the black hollow of a big bent limb,—
Hey! how he scudded!—but with our old “Ring”
Sharp after him—and father after “Ring”—
We after father, near as we could hold.
And father noticed that the fox kept just
About four feet ahead of “Ring”—just *that*—
No farther, and no nearer! Then he said:—
“There are young foxes in that tree back there,
And the mother-fox is drawing ‘Ring’ and us
Away from their nest there!” “Oh, le’ ’s go back!—
Do le’ ’s go back!” we little vandals cried,—
“Le’ ’s go back, quick, and find the little things—
Please, father!—Yes, and take ’em home for pets—
’Cause ‘Ring’ he’ll kill the old fox anyway!”

So father turned at last, and back we went,
And then he chopped a hole in the old tree
About ten feet along the limb from which
The old fox ran, and—Bless their little lives!—
There, in the hollow of the old tree-trunk—
There, on a bed of warm dry leaves and moss—
There, snug as any bug in any rug—
We found—one—two—three—four, and, yes-sir, *five*
Wee, weenty-teenty baby foxes, with
Their eyes just barely opened—*Cute?*—my-oh!—
The cutest—the most cunning little things
Two boys ever saw, in all their lives!—
“Raw weather for the little fellows *now!*”
Said father, as though talking to himself,—
“Raw weather, and no home *now!*”—And off came
His warm old “waumus”; and in that he wrapped
The helpless little fellows, and held

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Them soft and warm against him as he could,—
And home we happy children followed him.—

Old "Ring" did not reach home till nearly dusk:
The mother-fox had led him a long chase—
"Yes, and a fool's chase, too!" he seemed to say,
And looked ashamed to hear us *praising* him.
But, *mother*—well, we *could not* understand
Her acting as she did—and we so *pleased*!
I can see yet the look of pained surprise
And deep compassion of her troubled face
When father very gently laid his coat,
With the young foxes in it, on the hearth
Beside her, as she brightened up the fire.
She urged—for the old fox's sake and theirs—
That they be taken back to the old tree;
But father—for *our* wistful sakes, no doubt—
Said we would keep them, and would try our best
To raise them. And at once he set about
Building a snug home for the little things
Out of an old big bushel-basket, with
Its fractured handle and its stoven ribs:
So, lining and padding this all cozily,
He snuggled in its little tenants, and
Called in John Wesley Thomas, our hired man,
And gave him in full charge, with much advice
Regarding the just care and sustenance of
Young foxes.—"John," he said, "you feed 'em *milk*—
Warm milk, John Wesley! Yes, and *keep 'em* by
The stove—and keep your stove *a-roarin'*, too,
Both night and day!—And keep 'em *covered* up—
Not *smothered*, John, but snug and comfortable.—
And now, John Wesley Thomas, first and last,—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

You feed 'em *milk—fresh milk—and always warm—*
Say five or six or seven times a day—
Of course we'll grade that by the way they *thrive.*"
But, for all sanguine hope, and care, as well,
The little fellows *did not* thrive at all.—
Indeed, with *all* our care and vigilance,
By the third day of their captivity
The last survivor of the fated five
'Squeaked, like some battered little rubber toy
Just clean wore out.—And that's just what it wuz!
And—nights,—the cry of the mother-fox for her young
Was heard, with awe, for long weeks afterward.
And we boys, every night, would go to the door
And, peering out in the darkness, listening,
Could hear the poor fox in the black bleak woods
Still calling for her little ones in vain.
As, all mutely, we returned to the warm fireside,
Mother would say: "How would you like for *me*
To be out there, this dark night, in the cold woods,
Calling for *my* children?"

II

UNCLE BRIGHTENS UP

Uncle he says 'at 'way down in the sea
Ever'thing's ist like it *used* to be:—
He says they's mermaids, an' mermens, too,
An' little merchildern, like me an' you—
Little merboys, with tops an' balls,
An' little mergirls, with little merdolls.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

III

A PET OF UNCLE SIDNEY'S

Uncle Sidney's vurry proud
Of little Leslie-Janey,
'Cause she's so smart, an' goes to school
Clean 'way in Pennsylvany!

She print' an' sent a postul-card
To Uncle Sidney, telling
How glad he'll be to hear that she
"Toock the onners in Speling."

IV

IN THE KINDERGARTEN OF NOBLE SONG

Uncle he learns us to rhyme an' write
An' all be poets an' all recite:
His little-est poet's his little-est niece,
An' this is her little-est poetry-piece.

V

SINGS A "WINKY-TOODEN" SONG—

O here's a little rhyme for the Spring-
or Summer-time—

An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!—
Just a little bit o' tune you can twitter, May
or June,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!
It's a song that soars and sings,
As the birds that twang their wings
Or the katydids and things
Thus and so, don't you know,
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!
It's a song just broken loose, with no reason
or excuse—
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!
You can sing along with it—or it matters not
a bit—
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!
It's a lovely little thing
That 'most any one could sing
With a ringle-dingle-ding,
Soft and low, don't you know,
An' a-ho-winky-tooden-an'-a-ho!

238 *In Fervent Praise of Picnics*

PICNICS is fun 'at's purty hard to beat
I purt' nigh ruther go to them than *eat*
I purt' nigh ruther go to them than go
With our Charlotty to the Trick-Dog Show!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

239

Climatic Sorcery

WHEN frost's all on our winder, an' the snows
All out-o'-doors, our "Old-Kriss"-milkman goes
A-drivin' round, ist purt' nigh froze to death,
With his old white mustache froze full o' breath.

But when it's summer an' all warm ag'in,
He comes a-whistlin' an' a-drivin' in
Our alley, 'thout no coat on, ner ain't cold,
Ner his mustache ain't white, ner he ain't old.

240

A Dubious "Old Kriss"

US-FOLKS is purty pore—but Ma
She's waitin'—two years more—tel Pa
He serve his term out. Our Pa he—
He's in the Penitenchurrie!

Now don't you tell!—'cause Sis,
The *baby*, *she* don't know he is.—
'Cause she wuz only four, you know,
He kissed her last an' hat to go!

Pa alluz liked Sis best of all
Us childern.—'Spect it's 'cause she fall
When she 'uz ist a *child*, one day—
An' make her back look thataway.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Pa—'fore he be a burglar—he's
A locksmith, an' maked locks, an' keys,
An' knobs you pull fer bells to ring,
An' he could ist make *anything*!—

'Cause our Ma *say* he can!—*An'* this
Here little pair o' crutches Sis
Skips round on—Pa maked *them*—yes-sir!—
An' silivur-plate-name here fer her!

Pa's out o' work when Chris'mus come
One time, an' stay away from home,
An' 's drunk an' 'buse our Ma, an' swear
They ain't no "Old Kriss" anywhere!

An' Sis she alluz say they *wuz*
A' Old Kriss—an' she alluz does.
But ef they *is* a' Old Kriss, why,
When's Chris'mus, Ma she alluz *cry*?

This Chris'mus *now*, we live here in
Where Ma's rent's alluz due ag'in—
An' she "ist slaves"—I heerd her say
She did—ist them words thataway!

An' th'other night, when all's so cold
An' stove's 'most out—our Ma she rolled
Us in th' old feather-bed an' said,
"To-morry's Chris'mus—go to bed,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"An' thank yer blessed stars fer this—
We don't 'spect nothin' from Old Kriss!"
An' cried, an' locked the door, an' prayed,
An' turned the lamp down. . . . An' I laid

There, thinkin' in the dark ag'in,
"Ef *wuz* Old Kriss, he can't git in,
'Cause ain't no chimbly here at all—
Ist old stovepipe stuck frue the wall!"

I sleeped nen.—An' wuz dreamin' some
When I waked up an' morning's come,—
Fer our Ma she wuz settin' square
Straight up in bed, a-readin' there

Some letter 'at she'd read, an' quit,
An' nen hold like she's huggin' it.—
An' diamon' ear-rings she don't *know*
Wuz in her ears tel I say so—

An' wake the rest up. An' the sun
In frue the winder dazzle-un
Them eyes o' Sis's, wiv a sure-
Enough gold chain Old Kriss brought to 'er!

An' *all* of us git gold things!—Sis,
Though, she say she know it "*ain't* Old Kriss—
He kissed her, so she waked an' saw
Him skite out—an' it wuz her Pa."

THE HOOSIER BOOK

241

The Jaybird

THE Jaybird he's my favorite
Of all the birds they is!
I think he's quite a stylish sight
In that blue suit of his:
An' when he 'lights an' shuts his wings,
His coat's a "cutaway"—
I guess it's only when he sings
You'd know he wuz a jay.

I like to watch him when he's lit
In top of any tree,
'Cause all birds git wite out of it
When *he* 'lights, an' they see
How proud he act', an' swell an' spread
His chest out more an' more,
An' raise the feathers on his head
Like it's cut pompadore!

242

A Bear Family

WUNZT, 'way West in Illinoise,
Wuz two Bears an' their two boys:
An' the two boys' names, you know,
Wuz—like *ours* is,—Jim an' Jo;
An' their *parunts'* names wuz same's
All big grown-up people's names,—
Ist *Miz* Bear, the neighbors call
'Em, an' *Mister* Bear—at's all.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yes—an' Miz Bear scold him, too,
Ist like grown folks *shouldn't* do!
Wuz a grea'-big river there,
An', 'crosst that, 's a mountain where
Old Bear said some day he'd go,
Ef she don't quit scoldin' so!
So, one day when he been down
The river, fishin', 'most to town,
An' come back 'thout no fish a-tall,
An' Jim an' Jo they run an' bawl
An' tell their ma their pa hain't fetch'
No fish,—she scold again an' ketch
Her old broom up an' biff him, too.—
An' he ist cry, an' say, "*Boo-hoo!*
I told you what I'd do some day!"
An' he ist turned an' runned away
To where's the grea'-big river there,
An' ist *splunged* in an' swum to where
The mountain's at, 'way th' other side,
An' clumbed up there. An' Miz Bear *cried*—
An' little Jo an' little Jim—
Ist like their ma—bofe cried fer him!—
But he clumbed on, *clean out o' sight*,
He wuz so mad!—An' served 'em right!
Nen—when the Bear got 'way on top
The mountain, he heerd somepin' *flop*
Its wings—an' somepin' else he heerd
A-rattlin'-like.—An' he wuz *skeered*,
An' looked 'way up, an'—*Mercy sake!*
It wuz a' Eagul an' a SNAKE!
An'-sir! the Snake, he bite an' kill'
The Eagul, an' they bofe fall till

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They strike the ground—*k'spang-k'spat!*
Wite where the Bear wuz standin' at!
An' when here come the Snake at *him*,
The Bear he think o' little Jim
An' Jo, he did—an' their ma, too,—
All safe at home; an' he ist flew
Back down the mountain—an' could hear
The old Snake rattlin', sharp an' clear,
Wite clos't behind!—An' Bear he's so
All tired out, by time, you know,
He git down to the river there,
He know' he can't *swim* back to where
His folks is at. But ist wite nen
He see a boat an' six big men
'At's been a-shootin' ducks: An' so
He skeered them out the boat, you know,
An' ist jumped in—an' Snake *he* tried
To jump in, too, but falled outside
Where all the water wuz; an' so
The Bear grabs one the things you row
The boat wiv an' ist whacks the head
Of the old Snake an' kills him dead!—
An' when he's killed him dead, w'y, nen
The old Snake's drowned dead again!
Nen Bear set in the boat an' bowed
His back an' rowed—an' rowed—an' rowed—
Till he's safe home—so tired he can't
Do nothin' but lay there an' pant
An' tell his childern, "Bresh my coat!"
An' tell his wife, "Go chain my boat!"
An' they're so glad he's back, they say
"They *knowed* he's comin' thataway

THE HOOSIER BOOK

To ist su'prise the dear ones there!"
An' Jim an' Jo they dried his hair
An' pulled the burrs out; an' their ma
She ist set there an' helt his paw
Till he wuz sound asleep, an' nen
She tell' him she won't scold again—
Never—never—never—
Ferever an' ferever!

243 *Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze*

OLD Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze
Lives 'way up in the leaves o' trees.
An' wunst I slipped up-stairs to play
In Aunty's room, while she 'uz away;
An' I clumbed up in her cushion-chair
An' ist peeked out o' the winder there;
An' there I saw—wite out in the trees—
Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze!

An' Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze
Would bow an' bow, with the leaves in the breeze,
An' waggle his whiskers an' raggedly hair,
An' bow to me in the winder there!
An' I'd peek out, an' he'd peek in
An' waggle his whiskers an' bow ag'in,
Ist like the leaves 'u'd wave in the breeze—
Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze,
Seem-like, says to me: "See my bees
A-bringin' my dinner? An' see my cup
O' locus'-blossoms they've plum filled up?"
An' "*Um-yum, honey!*" wuz last he said,
An' waggled his whiskers an' bowed his head;
An' I yells, "Gimme some, won't you, please,
Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze?"

244 *Little-Girl-Two-Little-Girls*

I'M twins, I guess, 'cause my Ma say
I'm two little girls. An' one o' me
Is *Good* little girl; an' th' other 'n' she
Is *Bad* little girl as she can be!
An' Ma say so, 'most ever' day. •

An' she's the *funniest* Ma! 'Cause when
My Doll won't mind, an' I ist cry,
W'y, nen my Ma she sob an' sigh,
An' say, "Dear Good little girl, good-by!—
Bad little girl's comed here again!"

Last time 'at Ma act' thataway,
I cried all to myse'f a while
Out on the steps, an' nen I smile,
An' git my Doll all fix' in style,
An' go in where Ma's at, an' say:

THE HOOSIER BOOK

*"Morning to you, Mommy dear!
Where's that Bad little girl wuz here?
Bad little girl's goned clean away,
An' Good little girl's comed back to stay."*

245 *A Gustatory Achievement*

LAST Thanksgivin'-dinner we
Et at Granny's house, an' she
Had—ist like she alluz does—
Most an' best pies ever wuz.

Canned *blackburry*-pie an' *goose-*
*Bur*ry, squshin'-full o' juice;
An' *rozburry*—yes, an' plum—
Yes, an' *chur*ry-pie—*um-yum!*

Peach an' punkin, too, you bet.
Lawzy! I kin taste 'em yet!
Yes, an' *custard*-pie, an' *mince!*

An'—I—*ain't*—et—no—pie—since!

246 *A Parent Reprimanded*

SOMETIMES I think 'at Parunts does
Things ist about as bad as *us*—
Wite 'fore our vurry eyes, at that!
Fer one time Pa he scold' my Ma
'Cause he can't find his hat;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' she ist *cried*, she did! An' I
Says, "Ef you scold my Ma
Ever again an' make her cry,
W'y, you shan't *be* my Pa!"
An' nen he laugh' an' find his hat
Ist wite where Ma she said it's at!

247

"*Company Manners*"

WHEN Bess gave her dollies a Tea, said she,
"It's unpolite, when they's Company,
To say you've dranked *two* cups, you see,—
But say you've dranked *a couple* of tea."

THE BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB

248 *The Boys of the Old Glee Club*

YOU-FOLKS rickollect, I know—
'Tain't so *very* long ago—
Th' Old Glee Club—was got up here
'Bout first term Grant tuk the Cheer
Fer President four year—and then
Riz—and tuk the thing again!
Politics was runnin' high,
And the *Soldiers* mighty nigh
Swep' the Country—'bout on par
With their ricord through the War.
Glee Club, mainly, Soldiers, too—
Most the Boys had wore the blue,—
So their singin' had the swing—
Kind o' sort o' Shiloh-ring,
Don't you know, 'at kind o' got
Clean *inside* a man and shot
Telegrams o' joy dee-vine
Up and down his mortal spine!
They was jest *boys* then, all young—
And 'bout lively as they sung!
Now they hain't young any more—
(*'Less* the ones 'at's gone before

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'S got their youth back, glad and free
'N' keerless as they used to be!)
Burgess Brown's old friends all 'low
He is 'most as lively now,
And as full o' music, too,
As when Old Glee Club was new!
And *John Blake*, you mind, 'at had
The near-sightedness so bad,
When he sung by note, the rest
Read 'em fer him, er he *guessed*
How they run—and *sung* 'em, too,
Clair and sweet as honey-dew!
Harry Adams's here—and he's
Jollyin' ever' man he sees
'At complains o' gittin' gray
Er a-agein' anyway.
Harry he jest *thrives* on fun—
"Troubles?" *he* says,—*"Nary one!"*
Got gran'-children I can play
And keep young with, night and day!"
Then there's *Ozzy Weaver*—he's
Kickin', lively as you please,—
'N' *Dearie Macy*.—Called 'em then
"The Cherubs." Sung "We are two Men
O' th' Olden Time." Well! their duets
Was jest sweet as violets!
And *Dan Ransdell*—he's still here—
Not jest in the *town*, but near
Enough, you bet, to allus come
Prompt' on time to vote at home!
Dan he's be'n in Washington

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Sence he went with Harrison. . . .
And *John Slauson*—(Boys called John
“Sloppy Weather.”)—he went on
Once to Washington; and Dan
Intertained him:—Ever’ man,
From the President, to all
Other big-guns’ Dan could haul
In posish ’ud have to shake
Hands with John fer old times’ sake.
And to hear *John*, when he got
Home again, w’y, you’d ’a’ caught
His own sperit and dry fun
And mis-chieve-y-ousness ’at run
Through his talk of all he see:—
“Ruther pokey there, fer *me*,”
John says,—“though, of course, I met
Mostly jest the *Cabinet*
Members; and the President
He’d drop round: and then we went
Incogg fer a quiet walk—
Er sometimes jest set and talk
’Bout old times back here—and how
All *you*-boys was doin’ now,
And Old Glee Club songs; and then
He’d say, ’f he *could*, once again,
Jest hear *us*—‘*once more*,’ says he,—
‘I’d shed Washington, D. C.,
And jest fall in ranks with you
And march home, a-singin’, too!’”
And *Bob Geiger*—*Now* lives down
At Atlanty,—but this town

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'S got Bob's *heart*—a permanent
And time-honored resident.
Then there's *Mahlon Butler*—still
Lookin' like he allus will!
"How you feelin'?" s'I, last time
I see Mahlon: 'N' *he* says, "I'm
Feelin'?" says, "so peert and gay
'F I's *hitched up* I'd run away!"
He says, "Course I'm *bald* a bit,
But not 'nough to *brag* on it
Like *Dave Wallace* does," he says,
"With his *two* shamefacetedness!"
(Dave jest laughs and lifts his "dice"
At the joke, and blushes—twice.)
And *Ed. Thompson*, *he's* gone on—
They's a whole quartette 'at's gone—
Yes, a whole quartette, and *more*,
Has crossed on the Other Shore. . . .
Sabold and *Doc Wood'ard's* gone—
'N' *Ward*; and—last,—*Will Tarkington*.—
Ward 'at made an Irish bull
Actchully jest beautiful!—
"Big-nose Ben," says Ward, "I s'pose,
Makes an eyesore of his nose!"
And *Will Tarkington*—Ef *he*
Ever had an *inemy*,
The Good Bein's plans has be'n
Tampered with!—because all men,
Women and childern—ever' one—
Loved to love Will Tarkington!
The last time I heerd 'em *all*
Was at Tomilsonian Hall,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

As I rickollect—and *know*,—
Must be'n fifteen year' ago!—
Big Mass Meetin'—*thousands* here. . . .
Old Dick Thompson in the Cheer
On the stage—and three er four
Other "Silver-Tongues" er more! . . .
Mind Ben Harrison?—Clean, rich,
Ringin' voice—" 'bout concert-pitch,"
Tarkington *he* called it, and
Said its music 'clipsed the band
And Glee Club both rolled in one!—
('Course you all knowed *Harrison!*)
Yes, and Old Flag, streamin' clean
From the high arch 'bove the scene
And each side the Speaker's stand.—
And a *Brass*, and *Sheepskin* Band,
('Twixt the speeches 'at was made)
'At cut loose and banged and played—
S'pose, to have the *noise* all through
So's the crowd could listen to
Some *real* music!—Then Th' Old Glee
Club marched out to victory!—
And sich singin'!—Boys was jest
At their very level-best! . . .
My! to *hear* 'em!—From old "Red-
White-and-Blue," to "Uncle Ned"!—
From "The Sword of Bunker Hill,"
To "Billy Magee-Magaw"!—And—still
The more they sung, the more, you know,
The crowd jest *wouldn't* let 'em go!—
Till they reached the final notch
O' glory with old "Larboard Watch"!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Well! *that* song's a song my soul
Jest swings off in, past control!—
Allus did and allus will
Lift me clair of earthly ill
And interrogance and doubt
O' what the good Lord's workin' out
Anyway er anyhow! . . .
Shet my eyes and hear it *now!*—
Till, at-night, that ship and sea
And wet waves jest wallers me
Into that same sad yet glad
Certainty *the Sailor* had ●
When waked to his watch and ward
By th' lone whisper of the Lord—
Heerd high 'bove the hoarsest roar
O' any storm on sea er shore!

Time's be'n clockin' on, you know!
Sabold, who ~~was~~ first to go,
Died back East, in ninety-three,
At his old home, Albany:
Ward was next to leave us—Died
New York. . . . How we laughed and
cried
Both together at them two
Friends and comards tried and true!—
Ner they wasn't, when they died,
Parted long—'most side-by-side
They went singin', you might say,
Till their voices died away
Kind o' into a duet
O' silence they're rehearsin' yet.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Old Glee Club's be'n meetin' less
And less frequenter, I guess,
Sence so many's had to go—
And the rest all miss 'em so!
Still they's calls they' got to make,
Fer old reputation's sake,
So to speak; but, 'course, they all
Can't jest answer *ever* call—
'Ceptin' Christmas-times, er when
Charity calls on 'em then;
And—not *chargin'* anything—
W'y, the Boys's jest *got* to sing! . . .
Campaign work, and jubilees
To wake up the primaries;
Loyal Legions—G. A. R.'s—
Big Reunions—Stripes-and-Stars
Fer Schoolhouses ever'where—
And Church-doin's, here and there—
And Me-morial Meetin's, when
Our War-Gov'ner lives again!
Yes, and Decoration Days—
Martial music—prayers and praise
Fer the Boys 'at marched away
So's *we'd* have a place to stay! . . .
Little childern, 'mongst the flowers,
Learnin' 'bout this Land of Ours,
And the price these Soldiers paid,
Gethered in their last parade. . . .
O that sweetest, saddest sound!—
"Tenting on the old Campground." . . .
The Old Glee Club—singin' so
Quaverin'-like and soft and low,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ever' listener in the crowd
Sings in *whispers*—but, *out 'loud*,
Sings as ef he didn't keer—
Not fer *nothin'*! . . . Ketch me here
Whilse I'm honest, and I'll say
God's way is the only way! . . .
So I' allus felt, i jing!
Ever' time the Boys 'ud sing
'Bout "A Thousand Years, my Own
Columbia!"—er "The Joys we've Known"—
"Hear dem Bells"—er "Hi-lo, Hail!"—
I have felt God must prevail—
Jest like ever' boy 'at's gone
Of 'em all, whilse he was on
Deck here with us, seemed to be
Livin', laughin' proof, to *me*,
Of Eternal Life—No more
Will than *them all*, gone before! . . .
Can't I—many-a-time—jest see
Them *all*, like they *used* to be!—
Tarkington, fer instance, clean
Outside o' the man you *seen*,
Singin'—till not only you
Heerd his voice but *felt* it, too,
In back of the bench you set
In—And 'most can feel it yet!
Yes, and *Will's* the last o' five
Now that's dead—yet still *alive*,
True as Holy Writ's own word
Has be'n spoke and man has heerd!
Them was left when Will went on
Has met once sence he was gone—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Met jest once—but not to sing
Ner to practise anything.—
Facts is, they jest didn't know
Why they *was* a-meetin' so;—
But *John Brush* he had it done
And invited ever' one
Of 'em he could find, to call
At his office, "Music Hall,"
Four o'clock—one Saturd'y
Afternoon.—And this was three
Er four weeks, mind, sence the day
We ha~~ve~~ laid poor Will away.
Mahlon Butler he come past
My shop, and I dropped my last
And went with him, wonder'n', too,
What new *joke* Brush had in view;—
But, when all got there, and one-
By-one was give' a seat, and none
O' Brush's *twinkles* seemed in 'sight,
'N' he looked *biz* all right, all right,—
We saw—when he'd locked the door—
What *some* of us, years before,
Had seen, and long sence fergot—
(*Seen* but not *heerd*, like as not.)—
How Brush, once when Admiral Brown
'S back here in his old home-town
And flags ever'wheres—and Old
Glee Club tellin' George to "Hold
The Fort!" and "We" would "make 'em flee
By land and sea," et cetera,—
How Brush had got the Boys to sing
A song in that-there very thing

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Was on the table there to-day—
Some kind o' 'phone, you know.—But say!
When John touched it off, and we
Heerd it singin'—No-sir-ee!—
Not the *machine* a-singin'—No,—
Th' *Old Glee Club* o' long ago! . . .
There was *Sabold's* voice again—
'N' *Ward's*;—and, sweet as summer-rain,
With glad boy-laughture's trills and runs,
Ed. Thompson's voice and *Tarkington's*! . . .
And *ah*, to *hear* them, through the storm
Of joy that swayed each listener's form—
Seeming to call, with hail and cheer,
From Heaven's high seas down to us here:—

*"But who can speak the joy he feels
While o'er the foam his vessel reels,
And his tired eyelids slumbering fall,
He rouses at the welcome call
Of 'Larboard Watch, Ahoy!'"*

. And O
To *hear* them—same as long ago—
The listeners whispered, still as death,
With trembling lips and broken breath,
As with one voice—and eyes all wet,—
*"God!—God!—Thank God, they're singing
yet!"*

A DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS

249 *A Defective Santa Claus*

*Little Boy! Halloo!—halloo!
Can't you hear me calling you?—
Little Boy that used to be,
Come in here and play with me.*

♦

ALLUS when our Pa he's away
Nen Uncle Sidney comes to stay
At our house here—so Ma an' me
An' Etty an' Lee-Bob won't be
Afeard ef anything at night
Might happen—like Ma says it might.
(Ef *Trip* wuz *big*, I bet you he
'Uz best watch-dog you ever see!)
An' so last winter—ist before
It's go' be Chris'mus-Day,—w'y, shore
Enough, Pa had to haf to go
To 'tend a lawsuit—"An' the snow
Ist right fer Santy Claus!" Pa said,
As he clumb in old Ayersuz sled,
An' say he's sorry *he* can't be
With us that night—" 'Cause," he-says-ee,
"Old Santy *might* be comin' here—
This very night of all the year
I' got to be away!—so all
You kids must tell him—ef he call—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He's mighty welcome, an' yer Pa
He left his love with you an' Ma
An' Uncle Sid!" An' clucked, an' leant
Back, laughin'—an' away they went!
An' Uncle wave' his hands an' yells
"Yer old horse ort to have on bells!"
But Pa yell back an' laugh an' say
"I 'spect when *Santy* come this way
It's time enough fer sleighbells nen!"
An' holler back "Good-by!" again,
An' reach out with the driver's whip
An' cut behind an' drive back Trip.

An' so all day it snowed an' snowed!
An' Lee-Bob he ist watched the road;
In his high-chair; an' Etty she
'Ud play with Uncie Sid an' me—
Like she wuz he'ppin' fetch in wood
An' keepin' old fire goin' good,
Where Ma she wuz a-cookin' there
In kitchen, too, an' ever'where!
An' Uncle say, "'At's ist the way
Yer Ma's b'en workin', night an' day,
Sence she hain't big as Etty is
Er Lee-Bob in that chair o' his!"
Nen Ma she'd laugh 't what Uncle said,
An' smack an' smooove his old bald head
An' say "Clear out the way till I
Can keep that pot from b'ilin' dry!"
Nen Uncle, when she's gone back to
The kitchen, says, "We ust to do

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Some cookin' in the *ashes*.—Say,
S'posin' we try some, thataway!"
An' nen he send us to tell Ma
Send two big 'taters in he saw
Pa's b'en keepin' 'cause they got
The premium at the Fair! An' what
You think?—He rake a grea'-big hole
In the hot ashes, an' he roll
Them old big 'taters in the place
An' rake the coals back—an' his face
Ist swettin' so's he purt' nigh swear
'Cause it's so hot! An' when they're there
'Bout time 'at we fergit 'em, he
Ist rake 'em out again—an' *gee!*—
He bu'st 'em with his fist wite on
A' old stove-led, while Etty's gone
To git the salt, an' butter, too—
Ist like he said she haf to do,
No matter what *Ma* say! An' so
He salt an' butter 'em, an' blow
'Em cool enough fer us to eat—
An' *me-o-my!* they're hard to beat!
An' Trip 'ud ist lay there an' paht
Like he'd laugh *out loud*, but he can't.
Nen Uncle fill his pipe—an' we
'Ud he'p him light it—Sis an' me,—
But mostly little Lee-Bob, 'cause
"He's the best *Lighter* ever wuz!"
Like Uncle telled him wunst when Lee-
Bob cried an' jerked the light from me,
He wuz so mad! So Uncle pat
An' pet him (Lee-Bob's ust to that—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Cause he's the *little*-est, you know,
An' allus has b'en humored so!
Nen Uncle gits the flat-arn out,
An', while he's tellin' us all 'bout
Old Chris'mus-times when *he's* a kid,
He ist cracked hickernuts, he did,
Till they's a crockful, mighty nigh!
An' when they're all done by an' by,
He raked the red coals out again
An' telled me, "Fetch that popcorn in,
An' old three-leggud skillit—an'
The *led* an' all now, little man,—
An' yer old Uncle here 'ull show
You how corn's popped, long years ago
When me an' Santy Cläus wuz boys
On Pap's old place in Illinois!—
An' your Pa, too, wuz chums, all through,
With Santy!—Wisht Pa'd be here, too!"
Nen Uncle sigh at Ma, an' she
Pat him again, an' say to me
An' Etty,—“You take warning fair!—
Don't talk too much, like Uncle there,
Ner don't fergit, like *him*, my dears,
That 'little pitchers has big ears!"
But Uncle say to her, "Clear out!—
Yer brother knows what he's about.—
You git your Chris'mus-cookin' done
Er these pore childern won't have none!"
Nen Trip-wake' up an' raise', an' nen
Turn roun' an' nen lay down again.
An' one time Uncle Sidney say,—
“When dogs is sleepin' thataway,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Like Trip, an' *whimpers*, it's a sign
He'll ketch *eight* rabbits—mayby *nine*—
Afore his fleas'll wake him—nen
He'll bite hisse'f to sleep again
An' try to dream he's go' ketch *ten*."
An' when Ma's gone again back in
The kitchen, Uncle scratch his chin
An' say, "When Santy Claus an' Pa
An' me wuz little boys—an' Ma,
When she's 'bout big as Etty there;—
W'y,—'When we're *growed*—no matter *where*,
Santy he cross' his heart an' say,—
'I'll come to see you, all, some day
When *you*' got childerns—all but me
An' pore old Sid!" Nen Uncle he
Ist kind o' shade his eyes an' pour'
'Bout forty-'leven bushels more
O' popcorn out the skillut there
In Ma's new basket on the chair.
An' nen he telled us—an' talk low,
"So Ma can't hear," he say:—"You know
Yer Pa know', when he drived away,
To-morry's go' be Chris'mus-Day;—
Well, nen *to-night*," he whisper, "see?—
It's go' be Chris'mus-*Eve*," says-ee,
"An', like yer Pa hint, when he went,
Old Santy Claus (now hush!) he's sent
Yer Pa a postul-card, an' write
He's shorely go' be here to-night. . . .
That's why yer Pa's so bored to be
Away to-night, when Santy he

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Is go' be here, sleighbells an' all,
To make you kids a Chris'mus-call!"
An' we're so glad to know *fer shore*
He's comin', I roll on the floor—
An' here come Trip a-waller'n' roun'
An' purt' nigh knock the clo'es-horse down!—
An' Etty grab Lee-Bob an' prance
All roun' the room like it's a dance—
Till Ma she come an' march us nen
To dinner, where we're *still* again,
But *tickled* so we ist can't eat
But pie, an' ist the hot mincemeat
With raisins in.—But *Uncle* et,
An' *Ma*. An' there they set an' set
Till purt' nigh supper-time; nen we
Tell him he's got to fix the Tree
'Fore *Santy* gits here, like he said.
We go nen to the old woodshed—
All bundled up, through the deep snow—
"An' snowin' yet, *jee-rooshy-O!*"
Uncle he said, an' he'p us wade
Back where's the Chris'mus-Tree he's made
Out of a little jackoak-top
He git down at the sawmill-shop—
An' Trip 'ud run ahead, you know,
An' 'tend-like he 'uz *eatin'* snow—
When we all waddle back with it;
An' Uncle set it up—an' git
It wite in front the fireplace—'cause
He says "'Tain't *so* 'at *Santy Claus*
Comes down *all* chimblies,—least, to-night
He's comin' in *this* house all right—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

By the front-door, as ort to be!—
We'll all be hid where we can *see!*"
Nen he look up, an' he see Ma
An' say, "It's ist too bad their *Pa*
Can't be here, so's to see the fun
The childern *will* have, ever' one!"

Well, *we!*—We hardly couldn't wait
Till it wuz dusk, an' dark an' late
Enough to light the lamp!—An' Lee-
Bob light a candle on the Tree—
"Ist *one*—'cause I'm 'The Lighter'!"—Nen
He clumb on Uncle's knee again
An' hug us *bofe*;—an' Etty git
Her little chist an' set on it
Wite clos't, while Uncle telled some more
'Bout Santy Claus, an' clo'es he wore
*"All maked o' furs, an' trimmed as white
As cotton is, er snow at night!"*
An' nen, all sudden-like, he say,—
*"Hush! Listen there! Hain't that a sleigh
An' sleighbells jinglin'?"* Trip go *"whooh!"*
Like *he* hear bells and *smell* 'em, too.
Nen we all listen. . . . An'-sir, shore
Enough, we hear bells—more an' more
A-jinglin' clos'ter—clos'ter still
Down the old crook-road roun' the hill.
An' Uncle he jumps up, an' all
The chairs he jerks back by the wall
An' th'ows a' overcoat an' pair
O' winder-curtains over there

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' says, "*Hide quick, er you're too late!*—
Them bells is stoppin' at the gate!—
Git back o' them-air chairs an' hide,
'Cause I hear Santy's voice outside!"
An' *Bang! bang! bang!* we heerd the door—
Nen it flew open, an' the floor
Blowed full o' snow—that's *first* we saw,
Till little Lee-Bob shriek' at Ma
"There's Santy Claus!—I know him by
His big white mufftash!"—an' ist cry
An' laugh an' *squeal* an' dance an' yell—
Till, when he quiet down a spell,
Old Santy bow an' th'ow a kiss
To him—an' one to me an' Sis—
An' nen go *clos't* to Ma an' stoop
An' kiss her—An' nen give a whoop
That *fainted* her!—'Cause when he bent
An' kiss her, he ist backed an' went,
Wite 'g'inst the Chris'mus-Tree ist where
The candle's at Lee-Bob lit there!—
An' set his white-fur belt afire—
An' blaze streaked roun' his waist an' *higher*
Wite up his old white beard an' th'oat!—
Nen Uncle grabs th' old overcoat
An' flops it over Santy's head,
An' swing the door wide back an' said,
"Come out, old man!—an' quick about
It!—I've ist got to put you out!"
An' out he sprawled him in the snow—
"Now roll!" he says—*"Hi-roll-ee-O!"*—
An' Santy, sputter'n' *"Ouch! Gee-whizz!"*
Ist roll an' roll fer all they is!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' Trip he's out there, too,—I know,
 'Cause I could hear him yappin' so—
 An' I heerd Santy, wunst er twic't,
 Say, as he's rollin', "*Drat the fice't!*"
 Nen Uncle come back in, an' shake
 Ma up, an' say, "Fer mercy-sake!—
 He hain't hurt none!" An' nen he said,—
 "You youngsters h'ist up-stairs to bed!—
 Here! kiss yer Ma 'Good night,' an' me,—
 We'll he'p old Santy fix the Tree—
 An' all yer whistles, horns an' drums
 I'll he'p you toot when morning comes!"

.
 It's a long while 'fore we go to sleep,—
 'Cause down-stairs, all-time somepin' keep
 A-kind o' scufflin' roun' the floors—
 An' openin' doors, an' *shettin'* doors—
 An' could hear Trip a-whinin', tob,
 Like he don't know ist *what* to do—
 An' tongs a-clankin' down *k'thump!*—
 Nen some one squonkin' the old pump—
 An' *Wobh!* how cold it soun' out there!—
 I could ist *see* the pump-spout where
 It's got ice chin-whiskers all wet
 An' drippy—An' I see it yet!
 An' nen, seem-like, I hear some mens
 A-talkin' out there by the fence,
 An' one says, "Oh, 'bout twelve o'clock!"
 "Nen," 'nother'n' says, "Here's to you, Doc!—
God bless us ever' one!" An' nen
 I heerd the old pump squonk again.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen I say my prayer all through
Like Uncle Sidney lea'n' me to,—
"O Father mine, e'en as Thine own,
This child looks up to Thee alone:
Asleep or waking, give him still
His Elder Brother's wish and will."
An' that's the last I know . . . Till Ma
She's callin' us—an' so is Pa,—
He holler "*Chris'mus-gif!*" an' say,—
"I'm got back home fer *Chris'mus-Day!*—
An' Uncle Sid's here, too—an' he
Is nibblin' 'roun' yer *Chris'mus-Tree!*"
Nen *Uncle* holler, "I suppose
Yer Pa's so proud he's froze his nose
He wants to turn it up at us,
'Cause *Santy* kick' up such a fuss—
Tetchin' hisse'f off same as ef
He wuz his own fireworks hisse'f!"

An' when we're down-stairs,—shore enough,
Pa's nose is froze, an' salve an' stuff
All on it—an' one hand's froze, too,
An' got a old yarn red-and-blue
Mitt on it—"An' he's froze some more
Acrost his chist, an' kind o' sore
All roun' his *dy-fram*," Uncle say.—
"But Pa he'd ort a-seen the way
Santy bear up last night when that-
Air fire break out, an' quicker'n *scat*
He's all a-blazin', an' them-'air
Gun-cotton whiskers that he wear

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Ist *flashin'!*—till I burn a hole
In the snow with him, an' he roll
The front-yard dry as Chris'mus jokes
Old parents plays on little folks!
But, long's a smell o' tow er wool,
I kep' him rollin' *beautiful!*—
Till I wuz *shore* I *shorely* see
He's *squenched!* W'y, hadn't b'en fer *me*,
That old man might a-burnt clear down
Clean—'plum'—level with the groun'!"
Nen Ma say, "*There*, Sid; that'll do!—
Breakfast is ready—*Chris'mus*, too.—
Your voice 'ud soun' best, sayin' *Grace*—
Say it." An' Uncle bow' his face
An' say so long a *Blessing* nen,
Trip bark' *two* times 'fore it's "A-men!"

RUBÁIYAT OF DOC SIFERS

250

Rubáiyát of Doc Sifers

IF you don't know DOC SIFERS I'll jes' argy, here and now,
You've bin a mighty little while about here, anyhow,
'Cause Doc he's rid these roads and woods—er *swum* 'em,
now and then—
And practised in this neighborhood sence hain't no tellin'
when!

In radius o' fifteen mil'd, all p'int's o' compass round,
No man er woman, chick er child, er team, on top o'
ground,
But knows *him*—yes, and got respects and likin' fer him,
too,
Fer all his so-to-speak dee-fects o' genius showin' through!

Some cláims he's absent-minded; some has said they wuz
afeard
To take his powders when he come and dosed 'em out, and
'peared
To have his mind on somepin' else—like County Ditch, er
some
New way o' tannin' mussrat-pelts, er makin' butter come.

He's cur'ous—they hain't no mistake about it!—but he's got
Enough o' extry brains to make a *jury*—like as not,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They's no *describin'* Sifers,—fer, when all is said and done,
He's jes' *hisse'f Doc Sifers*—ner they hain't no other one!

Doc's *allus*-sociable, polite, and 'greeable, you'll find—
Pervidin' ef you strike him right and nothin' on his mind,—
Like in some *hurry*, when they've sent fer Sifers *quick*, you
see,

To 'tend some sawmill-accident, er picnic jamboree ;

Er when the lightin' 's struck some harebrained harvest-
hand ; er in

Some 'tempt o' suicidin'—where they'd ort to try ag'in !

I've *knowed* Doc haul up from a trot and talk a' hour er
two

When railly he'd a-ort o' not a-stopped fer "*Howdy-do!*"

And then, I've met him 'long the road, *a-lopin'*,—starin'
straight

Ahead,—and yit he never knowed me when I hollered
"*Yate,*

Old Saddlebags!" all hearty-like, er "*Who you goin' to*
kill?"

And he'd say nothin'—only hike on faster, starin' still !

I'd bin insulted, many a time, ef I jes' wuzn't shore
Doc didn't mean a thing. And I'm not tetchy any more
Sence that-air day, ef he'd a-jes' a-stopped to jaw with *me*,
They'd bin a little dorter less in my own fambily !

Times *now*, at home, when Sifers' name comes up, I jes'
let on,

You know, 'at I think Doc's to *blame*, the way he's bin and
gone

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And disapp'inted folks—'Ll-jee-mun-nee! you'd ort to then
Jes' hear my wife light into me—"ongratefulest o' ment"

'Mongst all the women—mild er rough, splendiferous er
plain,

Er them *with* sense, er not enough to come in out the
rain,—

Jes' ever' shape and build and style o' women, fat er slim—
They all like Doc, and got a smile and pleasant word fer
him!

Ner hain't no horse I've ever saw but what'll neigh and try
To sidle up to him, and paw, and sense him, ear-and-eye :
Then jes' a tetch o' Doc's old pa'm, to pat 'em, er to shove
Along their nose—and they're as ca'm as any cooin' dove!

And same with *dogs*,—take any breed, er strain, er pedi-
gree,

Er racial caste 'at can't concede no use fer you er me,—
They'll putt all predju-dice aside in *Doc's* case and go in
Kahoots with him, as satisfied as he wuz kith-and-kin!

And Doc's a wonder, trainin' pets!—He's got a chicken-
hawk,

In kind o' half-cage, where he sets out in the gyarden-walk,
And got that wild bird trained so tame, he'll loose him, and
he'll fly

Clean to the woods!—Doc calls his name—and he'll come,
by and by!

Some says no money down 'ud buy that bird o' Doc.—
Ner no

Inducement to the *bird*, says I, 'at *he'd* let *Sifers* go!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And Doc *he* say 'at *he's* content—long as a bird o' prey
Kin 'bide *him*, it's a *compliment*, and takes it thataway.

But, gittin' back to *docterin'*—all the sick and in distress,
And old and pore, and weak and small, and lone and moth-
erless,—

I jes' tell you I 'preciate the man 'at's got the love
To "go ye forth and ministrat!" as Scriptur' tells us of.

Dull times, Doc jes' mianders round, in that old rig o' his:
And hain't no tellin' where he's bound ner guessin' where
he is;

He'll drive, they tell, jes' thataway fer maybe six er eight
Days at a stretch; and neighbors say he's bin clean round
the State.

He picked a' old tramp up, one trip, 'bout eighty mil'd from
here,

And fetched him home and k-yored his hip, and kep' him
'bout a year;

And feller said—in all *his* ja'nts round this terreschul ball
'At no man wuz a *circumstance* to Doc!—he topped 'em
all!—

Said, bark o' trees 's a' open book to Doc, and vines and
moss

He read like writin'—with a look knowed ever' dot and
cross:

Said, stars at night wuz jes' as good's a compass: said, he
s'pose

You couldn't lose Doc in the woods the darkest night that
blows!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Said, Doc'll tell you, purty clos't, by underbresh and plants,
How fur off *warter* is,—and 'most perdict the sort o'
chance

You'll have o' findin' *fish*; and how they're liable to *bite*,
And whether they're a-bitin' now, er only after night.

And, whilse we're talkin' *fish*,—I mind they formed a
fishin'-crowd

(When folks *could* fish 'thout gittin' *fined*, and seinin' wuz
allowed!)

O' leadin' citizens, you know, to go and seine "Old Blue"—
But hadn't no big seine, and so—w'y, what wuz they to
do? . . .

And Doc he say he thought 'at *he* could *knit* a stitch er
two—

"Bring the *materials* to me—'at's all I'm astin' you!"

And down he sets—six weeks, i jing! and knits that seine
plum done—

Made corks, too, brails and ever'thing—good as a boughten
one!

Doc's *public* sperit—when the sick's not takin' *all* his time
And he's got *some* fer politics—is simple yit sublime:—
He'll *talk* his *principles*—and they air *honest*;—but the sly
Friend strikes him first, election-day, he'd 'commodate, er
die!

And yit, though Doc, as all men knows, is square straight
up and down,

That vote o' his is—well, I s'pose—the cheapest one in
town;—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A fact 'at's sad to verify, as could be done on oath—
I've voted Doc myse'f—*And I was criminal fer both!*

You kin corrupt the *ballot-box*—corrupt *yourse'f*, as well—
Corrupt *some* neighbors,—but old Doc's as oncorruptible
As Holy Writ. So putt a pin right there!—Let *Sifers* be,
I jacks! he wouldn't vote ag'in' his own worst mimic!

When Cynthy Eubanks laid so low with fever, and Doc
Glenn

Told Euby Cynth 'ud haf to go—they sends fer *Sifers*
then! . . .

Doc sized the case: "She's starved," says he; "fer *warter*—
yes, and *meat!*"

The treatment 'at she'll git from *me's* all she kin drink and
eat!"

He orders Euby then to split some wood, and take and
build

A fire in kitchen-stove, and git a young spring-chicken
killed;

And jes' whirled in and th'owed his hat and coat there on
the bed,

And warshed his hands and sailed in that-air kitchen,
Euby said,

And biled that chicken-broth, and got that dinner—all com-
plete

And clean and crisp and good and hot as mortal ever eat!

And Cynth and Euby both'll say 'at Doc'll git as good
Meals-vittles up, jes' any day, as any *woman* could!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Time Sister Abbick tuk so bad with striffen o' the lung,
P'tracted Meetin', where she had jes' shouted, prayed, and
sung

All winter long, through snow and thaw,—when Sifers
come, says he:

"No, M'lissy; don't poke out your raw and cloven tongue
at me!—

"I know, without no symptoms but them *injarubber-shoes*
You promised me to never putt a fool-foot in ner use
At purril o' your life!" he said. "And I won't save you
now,

Onless—here on your dyin' bed—you consecrate your
vow!"

Without a-claimin' *any creed*, Doc's rail religious views
Nobody knows—ner got no *need* o' knowin' whilse he
choose

To be heerd not of man, ner raise no loud, vain-glorious
prayers

In crowded marts, er public ways, er—i jucks, *anywheres*!—

'Less'n it is away deep down in his ow'n heart, at night,
Facin' the storm, when all the town's a-sleepin' snug and
tight—

Him splashin' hence from scenes o' pride and sloth and
gilded show,

To some pore sufferer's bedside o' anguish, don't you
know!

Er maybe dead o' *winter*—makes no odds to *Doc*,—he's got
To face the weather ef it takes the hide off! 'cause he'll not

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Lie out o' goin' and p'tend he's sick hisse'f—like *some*
'At I could name 'at folks might send fer and they'd *never*
come!

Like pore Phin Hoover—when he goes to that last dance o'
his

That Chris'mus when his feet wuz froze—and Doc saved
all they is

Left of 'em—" 'Nough," as Phin say now, "to *track* me by,
and be

A advertisement, anyhow, o' what Doc's done fer me!—

"When *he* come—knife-and-saw"—Phin say, "I knowed, ef
I'd the spunk,

'At Doc 'ud fix me up *some* way, ef nothin' but my *trunk*
Wuz left, he'd fasten *casters* in and have me, spick-and-
span,

A-skootin' round the streets ag'in as spry as any man!"

Doc sees a patient's *got* to quit—he'll ease him down serene
As dozin' off to sleep, and yit not dope him with *morph-*
phcen.—

He won't tell *what*—jes' 'lows 'at he has "airnt the right to
sing

'O grave, where is thy victory? O death, where is thy
sting?" "

And, mind ye now!—it's not in scoff and scorn, by long
degree,

'At Doc gits things like that-un off: it's jes' his *shority*
And total faith in Life to Come,—w'y, "from that *Land o'*
Bliss,"

He says, "we'll haf to chuckle some, a-lookin' back at this!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And, still in p'int, I mind, one *night o' 'nitiation* at
Some secert lodge, 'at Doc set right down on 'em, square
and flat,
When they mixed up some Scriptur' and wuz *funnin'-like*—
w'y, he
Lit in 'em with a rep'imand 'at ripped 'em, A to Z!

And' onc't—when g'eneral loafin'-place wuz old' Shoe-Shop—
and all
The gang 'ud git in there and brace their backs ag'inst the
wall
And *settle* questions that had went onsettled long enough,—
Like "wuz no Heav'n—ner no torment"—*jes' talkin' awful
rough!*

There wuz Sloke Haines and old Ike Knight and Coonrod
Simmes—all three
Ag'inst the Bible and the Light, and scoutin' Deity.
"Science," says Ike, "it *demonstrates*—it takes nobody's
word—
Scriptur' er not,—it '*vestigates* ef sich things could oc-
curred!"

Well, Doc he heerd this,—he'd drapped in a minute, fer to
git
A tore-off heel pegged on ag'in,—and, as he stood on it
And stomped and grinned, he says to Ike, "I s'pose now,
purty soon
Some lightin'-bug, indignant-like, 'll '*vestigate* the
moon! . . .

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"No, Ike," says Doc, "this world hain't saw no brains like
yourn and mine

With sense enough to grasp a law 'at takes a brain divine.—
I've bared the thoughts of brains in doubt, and felt their
finest pulse,—

And mortal brains jes' won't turn out omnipotent results!"

And Doc he's got respects to spare the *rich* as well as
pore—

Says he, "I'd turn no *millionnaire* onsheltered from my
door."—

Says he, "What's wealth to him in quest o' *honest* friends
to back

And love him fer *hisse'f*?—not jes' because he's made his
jack!"

And childern.—*Childern?* Lawzy-day! Doc *worships* 'em!
—You call

Round at his house and *ast* 'em!—they're a-*swarmin'* there
—that's all!—

They're in his *Lib'ry*—in best room—in kitchen—fur and
near,—

In office too, and, I p'sume, his operatin'-cheer!

You know they's men 'at *bees* won't sting?—They's plaguy
few,—but Doc

He's one o' *them*.—And same, i jing! with *childern*;—they
jes' flock

Round Sifers *natchurl*!—in his lap, and in his pockets, too,
And in his old fur mitts and cap, and *heart* as warm and
true!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

It's cur'ous, too,—'cause Doc hain't got no childern of his
own—

'Ceptin' the ones he's tuk and brought up, 'at's bin left
alone

And orphans when their father died, er mother,—and Doc
he

Has he'pped their dyin' satisfied.—“The child shall live
with me

“And Winniferd, my wife,” he'd say, and stop right there,
and cle'r

His th'ot, and go on thinkin' way *some* mother-hearts
down here

Can't never feel *their own* babe's face a-pressin' 'em, ner
make

Their naked breasts a restin'-place fer any baby's sake.

Doc's Lib'ry—as he calls it,—well, they's ha'f-a-dozen
she'ves

Jam-full o' books—I couldn't tell *how* many—count your-
se'ves!

One whole she'f's Works on Medicine! and most the rest's
about

First Settlement, and Indians in here,—'fore we driv 'em
out.—

And Plutarch's Lives—and life also o' Dan'el Boone, and
this-

Here Mungo Park, and Adam Poe—jes' all the *lives*
they is!

And Doc's got all the *novels* out,—by Scott and Dickison
And Cooper.—And, I make no doubt, he's read 'em ever'
one!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Unc't, in his office, settin' there, with crowd o' eight er nine
Old neighbors with the time to spare, and Doc a-feelin' fine,
A man rid up from Rollins, jes' fer Doc to write him out
Some blame' p'scription—done, I guess, in minute, nigh
about.—

And *I* says, "Doc, you 'pear so spry, jes' write me that
recei't

You have fer bein' *happy* by,—fer that 'ud shorely beat
Your *medicine!*" says I.—And quick as *s'cat!* Doc turned
and writ

And handed me: "Go he'p the sick, and putt your heart
in it."

And then, "A-talkin' funder 'bout that line o' thought,"
says he,

"Ef we'll jes' do the work cut out and give' to you and me,
We'll lack no joy, ner appetite, ner all we'd ort to eat,
And sleep like childern ever' night—as puore and ca'm and
sweet."

Doc *has* bin 'cused o' *offishness* and lack o' talkin' free
And extry friendly; but he says, "I'm 'feard o' talk," says
he,—

"I've got," he says, "a natchurl turn fer talkin' fit to kill.—
The best and hardest thing to learn is trick o' keepin' still."

Doc *kin* smoke, and I s'pose he *might* drink lick—jes' fer
fun.

He says, "*You* smoke, *you* drink all right; but *I* don't—
neether one"—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Says, "I *like* whisky—'good old rye'—but like it in its place,
Like that-air warter in your eye, er nose there on your
face."

Doc's bound to have his joke! The day he got that off
on me

I jes' had sold a load o' hay at "Scofield's Livery,"
And tolled Doc in the shed they kep' the hears't in, where
I'd hid

The stuff 'at got me "out o' step," as Sifers said it did.

Doc hain't, to say, no "*rollin' stone*," and yit he hain't no
hand

Fer '*cumulatin'*.—*Home's* his own, and scrap o' farmin'-
land—

Enough to keep him out the way when folks is tuk down
sick

The suddentest—'most any day they want him 'special
quick.

And yit Doc loves his practise; ner don't, wilful, want to
slight

No call—no matter who—how fur away—er day er night—

He loves his work—he loves his friends—June, Winter,
Fall, and Spring:

His *lovin'*—facts is—never ends; he loves jes' *ever'*-
thing. . . .

'Cept—*keepin' books*. He never sets down no accounts.—
He hates,

The worst of all, collectin' debts—the worst, the more he
waits.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

I've knowed him, when at last he *had* to dun a man, to end
By makin' him a loan—and mad he hadn't more to lend.

When Pence's Drug Store ust to be in full blast, they wuz
some

Doc's patients got things frekantly there, charged to him,
i gum!—

Doc run a bill there, don't you know, and allus when he
squared,

He never questioned nothin',—so he had his feelin's spared.

Now sich as that, I hold and claim, hain't 'scusable—it's not
Perfessional!—It's jes' a shame 'at Doc hisse'f hain't got
No better *business-sense!* That's why lots'd respect him
more,

And not give him the clean go-by fer *other* doctors. Shore!

This-here Doc Glenn, fer instance; er this little jack-leg
Hall;—

They're *business*—folks respects 'em fer their *business*
more'n all

They ever knowed, or ever will, 'bout *medicine*.—Yit they
Collect their money, k-yore er kill.—They're *business*, any-
way!

You ast Jake Dunn:—he's worked it out in *figgers*.—He
kin show

Statistics how Doc's airnt about *three* fortunes in a row,—
Ever' ten-year' hand-runnin' straight—*three* of 'em—*thirty*
year'

'At Jake kin count and 'lucidate o' Sifers' practise here.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yit—"Praise the Lord," says Doc, "we've got our little home!" says he—

"(It's raily *Winniferd's*, but what she owns, she sheers with me.)

We' got our little gyarden-spot, and peach and apple trees,
And stable, too, and chicken-lot, and eighteen hive' o' bees."

You call it anything you please, but it's *witchcraft*—the power

'At Sifers' has o' handlin' bees!—He'll watch 'em by the hour—

Mix right amongst 'em, mad and hot and swarmin'!—yit they won't

Sting *him*, er *want* to—'pear to not,—at least I know they *don't*.

With *me* and bees they's no *p'tense* o' sociability—

A dad-burn bee 'ud climb a fence to git a whack at *me*!

I s'pose no thing 'at's *got* a sting is raily satisfied

It's *sharp* enough, ontel, i jing! he's honed it on my hide!

And Doc he's allus had a knack *inventin'* things.—Dee-vised
A windlass wound its own se'f back as it run down: and
s'prised

Their new hired girl with *clothes-line*, too, and *clothes-pins*,
all in *one*:

Purt' nigh all left fer *her* to do wuz git her *primpin'* done!

And one't, I mind, in airy Spring, and tappin' sugar trees,
Doc made a dad-burn little thing to sharpen *spiles* with—
these—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Here wood'-spouts 'at the peth's punched out, and driv' in
where they bore
The auger-holes. He sharpened 'bout a *million* spiles er
more!

And Doc's the first man ever swung a *bucket* on a tree
Instid o' *troughs*; and first man brung *grained* sugar—so's
'at he
Could use it fer his coffee, and fer cookin', don't you
know.—
Folks come clean up from Pleasantland 'fore they'd *believe*
it, though!

And all Doc's stable-doors *onlocks* and locks *theirse'ves*—
and gates
The same way;—all rigged up like clocks, with pulleys,
wheels, and weights,—
So, 's Doc says, "Drivin' *out*, er *in*, they'll *open*; and they'll
then,
All quiet-like, shet up ag'in like little gentlemen!"

And Doc 'ud made a mighty good *detective*.—Neighbors all
Will testify to *that*—er *could*, ef they wuz legal call:
His theories on any crime is worth your listenin' to.—
And he has hit 'em, many a time, long 'fore established true.

At this young druggist Wenfield Pence's trial fer his life,
On *primy faishy* evidence o' pizonin' his wife
Doc's testimony saved and cle'ed and 'quitted him and
freed
Him so's he never even 'peared cog-nizant of the deed!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The facts wuz—Sifers testified,—at inquest he had found
The stummick showed the woman *died o' pizon*, but had
downed

The dos't *herse'f*,—because *amount* and *cost o' drug* im-
ployed

No *druggist* would, on *no* account, 'a' lavished and dis-
troyed!

Doc tracked a blame-don burglar down, and *nailed* the
scamp, to boot,

But told him ef he'd leave the town he wouldn't prosecute.
He traced him by a tied-up thumb-print in fresh putty,
where

Doc glazed it. Jes' *that's* how he come to track him to his
lair!

Doc's jes' a *leetle* too inclined, *some* thinks, to overlook
The criminal and vicious kind we'd ort to bring to book
And punish, 'thout no extry show o' *sympathizin'*, where
They hain't showed none fer *us*, you know. But he takes
issue there:

Doc argies 'at "The Red-eyed Law," as *he* says, "ort to
learn

To lay a mighty leenient paw on deeds o' sich concern
As only the Good Bein' knows the wherefore of, and
spreads

His hands above accused and sows His mercies on their
heads."

Doc even holds 'at *murder* hain't no crime we got a right
To *hang* a man fer—claims it's *taint o' lunacy*, er *quite*.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"Hold *sich* a man responsibul fer murder," Doc says,—
"then,
When *he's* hung, where's the rope to pull them *sound-mind*
jurymen?"

"It's in a nutshell—*all* kin see," says Doc,—"*it's cle'r the*
Law's

As ap' to err as you er me, and kill without a cause :
The man most-innocent o' sin *I've* saw, er '*spect to see,*
Wuz servin' a life-sentence in the penitentchury."

And Doc's a whole hand at a *fire!*—directin' how and
where

To set your ladders, low er higher, and what first duties
air,—

Like formin' warter-bucket-line; and best man in the town
To chop holes in old roofs, and mine defective chimblies
down:

Er durin' any public crowd, mass-meetin', er big day,
Where ladies ortn't be allowed, as I've heerd Sifers say,—
When they's a sudden rush somewhere, it's Doc's voice,
ca'm and cle'r,

Says, "Fall back, men, and give her air!—that's *all* she's
faintin' fer."

The sorriest I ever feel fer Doc is when some show
Er circus comes to town and he'll not git a chance to go.
'Cause he jes' natchurly *delights* in circuses—clean down
From tumblers, in their spangled tights, to trick-mule and
Old Clown.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And ever'body *knows* it, too, how Doc is, thataway! . . .
I mind a circus onc't come through—wuz there myse'f that
day.—

Ring-master cracked his whip, you know, to start the ridin'
—when

In runs Old Clown and hollers "*Whoa!*—Ladies and gentlemen

"Of this vast audience, I fain would make inquiry cle'r,
And learn, find out, and ascertain—*Is Doctor Sifers here?*"
And when some fool-voice bellers down: "He is! He's
settin' in

Full view o' ye!" "*Then,*" says the Clown, "*the circus may
begin!*"

Doc's got a *temper*; but, he says, he's learnt it which is
boss,

Yit has to *watch* it, more er less. . . . I never seen him
cross

But onc't, enough to make him swear;—milch-cow stepped
on his toe,

And Doc ripped out "*I doggies!*"—There's the only case I
know.

Doc says that's what your temper's fer—to hold back out
o' view,

And learn it never to occur on out ahead o' you.—

"You lead the way," says Sifers—"git your *temper* back in
line—

And *furdest* back the *best*, ef it's as mean a one as mine!"

He hates contentions—can't abide a wrangle er dispute
O' any kind; and he 'ull slide out of a crowd and skoot

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Up some back-alley 'fore he'll stand and listen to a furse
When ary one's got upper-hand and t'other one's got worse

Doc says: "I 'spise, when pore and weak and awkward
talkers fails,

To see it's them with hardest cheek and loudest mouth
pervails.—

A' all-one-sided quarr'l 'll make me *biassed*, mighty near,—
'Cause ginerly the side I take's the one I never hear."

What 'peals to Doc the most and best is "seein' folks
agreed,

And takin' ekal interest and universal heed

O' ever'boday *else's* words and idies—same as we

Wuz glad and chirpy as the birds—jes' as we'd *ort* to be!"

And *paterotic!* Like to git Doc started, full and fair,
About the war, and why 't'uz fit, and what wuz 'complished
there;

"And who wuz *wrong*," says Doc, "er *right*, 't'uz waste o'
blood and tears,

All prophesied in *Black* and *White* fer years and years and
years!"

And then he'll likely kind o' tetch on old John Brown, and
dwell

On what *his* warnin's wuz; and ketch his breath and cough,
and tell

On down to Lincoln's death. And *then*—well, he jes'
chokes and quits

With "I must go now, gentlemen!" and grabs his hat, and
gits!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc's own war-rickord wuzn't won so much in line o' fight
As line o' work and nussin' done the wounded, day and
night.—

His wuz the hand, through dark and dawn, 'at bound their
wounds, and laid

As soft as their own mother's on their forreds when they
prayed. . . .

His wuz the face they saw the first—all dim, but smilin'
bright,

As they come to and knowed the worst, yit saw the old
Red-White-

And-Blue where Doc had fixed it where they'd see it
wavin' still,

Out through the open tent-flap there, er 'crost the winder-
sill.

And some's a-limpin' round here yit—a-waitin' Last Re-
view,—

'Ud give the pensions 'at they git, and pawn their crutches,
too,

To he'p Doc out, ef he wuz pressed financial'—same as he
Has *allus* he'pped them when distressed—ner never tuk a
fee.

Doc never wuz much hand to pay attention to *p'tense*
And fuss-and-feathers and display in men o' prominence:
"A raily *great* man," Sifers 'lows, "is not the out'ard
dressed—

All uniform, salutes and bows, and swellin' out his chest.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"I *met* a great man onc't," Doc says, "and shuk his hand,"
says he,
"And *he* come 'bout in *one*, I guess, o' disapp'intin' *me*—
He talked so common-like, and brought his mind so cle'r
in view
And simple-like, I purt' nigh thought, 'I'm best man o' the
two!'"

Yes-sir! Doc's got convictions and old-fashioned kind o'
ways
And idies 'bout this glorious Land o' Freedom; and he'll
raise
His hat clean off, no matter where, jes' ever' time he sees
The Stars and Stripes a-floatin' there and flappin' in the
breeze.

And tunes like old "Red-White-and-Blue" 'll fairly drive
him wild,
Played on the brass band, marchin' through the streets'
Jes' like a child
I've saw that man, his smile jes' set, all kind o' pale and
white,
Bareheaded, and his eyes all wet, yit dancin' with delight!

And yit, that very man we see all trimbly, pale and wann,
Give him a case o' *surgery*, we'll see another man!—
We'll do the trimblin' then, and *we'll* git white around the
gills—
He'll show us *nerve* o' nerves, and he 'ull show us *skill* o'
skills!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Then you could foot your horns and beat your drums and
bang your guns,

And wave your flags and march the street, and charge, all
Freedom's sons!—

And Sifers *then*, I bet my hat, 'ud never flinch a hair,
But, stiddy-handed, 'tend to that pore patient layin' there.

And Sifers' *eye's* as stiddy as that hand o' his!—He'll shoot
A' old-style rifle, like he has, and smallest bore, to boot,
With any fancy rifles made to-day, er expert shot
'At works at shootin' like a *trade*—and all *some* of 'em's
got!

Let 'em go right out in the *woods* with Doc, and leave their
“traps”

And blame' glass-balls and queensware-goods, and see how
Sifers draps

A squirrel out the tallest tree.—And 'fore he fires he'll say
Jes' where he'll hit him—yes, *sir-ee!* And he's hit that-
away!

Let 'em go out with him, i jucks! with fishin'-pole and
gun,—

And ekal chances, fish and ducks, and take the *rain*, er *sun*,
Jes' as it pours, er as it blinds the eyesight; *then* I guess
'At they'd acknowledge, in their minds, their disadvantages.

And yit *he'd* be the last man out to flap his wings and crow
Insultin'-like, and strut about above his fallen foe!—
No-*sir!* the hand 'at tuk the wind out o' their sails 'ud be
The very first they grabbed, and grinned to feel sich sym-
pathy.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Doc gits off now and then and takes a huntin'-~~trip~~ some
where

'Bout Kankakee, up 'mongst the lakes—sometimes'll drift
round there

In his canoe a week er two; then paddle clean on back
By way o' old Wabash and Blue, with fish—all he kin
pack,—

And wild ducks—some with feathers on 'em yit, and stuffed
with grass.

And neighbors—all knows he's bin *gone*—comes round and
gits a bass—

A great big double-breasted "rock," er "black," er maybe
pair

Half fills a' ordinary crock. . . . Doc's *fish*'ll give out
there

Long 'fore his *ducks*!—But folks'll smile and blandish him,
and make

Him tell and *tell* things!—all the while enjoy 'em jes' fer
sake

O' pleasin' *him*; and then turn in and la'nch him from the
start

A-tellin' all the things ag'in they raily know by heart.

He's jes' a *child*, 's what Sifers is! And-sir, I'd ruther see
That happy, childish face o' his, and puore simplicity,
Than any shape er style er plan o' mortals otherwise—
With perfect faith in God and man a-shinin' in his eyes.

TAMAM

A CHILD-WORLD

251

The Child-World

A CHILD-WORLD, yet a wondrous world no less,
To those who knew its boundless happiness.
A simple old frame house—eight rooms in all—
Set just one side the center of a small
But very hopeful Indiana town,—
The upper story looking squarely down
Upon the main street, and the main highway
From East to West,—historic in its day,
Known as The National Road—old-timers, all
Who linger yet, will happily recall
It as the scheme and handiwork, as well
As property, of “Uncle Sam,” and tell
Of its importance, “long and long afore
Railroads wuz ever drcamp’ of!”—Furthermore
The reminiscent first inhabitants
Will make that old road blossom with romance
Of snowy caravans, in long parade
Of covered vehicles, of every grade
From ox-cart of most primitive design,
To Conestoga wagons, with their fine
Deep-chested six-horse teams, in heavy gear,
High hames and chiming bells—to childish ear
And eye entrancing as the glittering train
Of some sun-smitten pageant of old Spain.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And, in like spirit, haply they will tell
You of the roadside forests, and the yell
Of "wolfs" and "painters," in the long night-ride,
And "screechin' catamounts" on every side.—
Of stage-coach days, highwaymen, and strange crimes,
And yet unriddled mysteries of the times
Called "Good Old." "And why 'Good Old'?" once a
rare

Old chronicler was asked, who brushed the hair
Out of his twinkling eyes and said,—“Well, John,
They're 'good old times' because they're dead and
gone!”

The old home site was portioned into three
Distinctive lots. The front one—natively
Facing to southward, broad and gaudy-fine
With lilac, dahlia, rose, and flowering vine—
The dwelling stood in; and behind that, and
Upon the alley north and south, left hand,
The old wood-house,—half, trimly stacked with wood,
And half, a workshop, where a work-bench stood
Steadfastly through all seasons.—Over it,
Along the wall, hung compass, brace-and-bit,
And square, and drawing-knife, and smoothing-plane—
And little jack-plane, too—the children's vain
Possession by pretense—in fancy they
Manipulating it in endless play,
Turning out countless curls and loops of bright,
Fine satin shavings—Rapture infinite!
Shelved quilting-frames; the tool-chest; the old box
Of refuse nails and screws; a rough gun-stock's

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Outline in "curly maple"; and a pair
Of clamps and old kraut-cutter hanging there.
Some "patterns," in thin wood, of shield and scroll,
Hung higher, with a neat "cane-fishing pole"
And careful tackle—all securely out
Of reach of children, rumaging about.

Beside the wood-house, with broad branches free
Yet close above the roof, an apple-tree
Known as "The Prince's Harvest"—Magic phrase!
That was *a boy's own tree*, in many ways!—
Its girth and height meet both for the caress
Of his bare legs and his ambitiousness:
And then its apples, humoring his whim,
Seemed just to fairly *hurry* ripe for him—
Even in June, impetuous as he,
They dropped to meet him, half-way up the tree.
And O their bruised sweet faces where they fell!—
And hol the lips that feigned to "*kiss them well*"!

"The Old Sweet-Apple Tree," a stalwart, stood
In fairly sympathetic neighborhood
Of this wild princeling with his early gold
To toss about so lavishly nor hold
In bounteous hoard to overbrim at once
All Nature's lap when came the Autumn months,
Under the spacious shade of this the eyes
Of swinging children saw swift-changing skies
Of blue and green, with sunshine shot between,
And "when the old cat died" they saw but green.
And, then, there was a cherry tree.—We all
And severally will yet recall

THE HOOSIER BOOK

From our lost youth, in gentlest memory,
The blessed fact—There was a cherry tree.

There was a cherry tree. Its bloomy snows
Cool even now the fevered sight that knows
No more its airy visions of pure joy—
As when you were a boy.

There was a cherry tree. The Bluejay set
His blue against its white—O blue as jet
He seemed there then!—But *now*—Whoever knew
He was so pale a blue!

There was a cherry tree—Our child-eyes saw
The miracle:—Its pure white snows did thaw
Into a crimson fruitage, far too sweet
But for a boy to eat.

There was a cherry tree, give thanks and joy!
There was a bloom of snow—There was a boy—
There was a Bluejay of the realest blue—
And fruit for both of you.

Then the old garden, with the apple trees
Grouped round the margin, and “a stand of bees”
By the “white-winter-pearmain”; and a row
Of currant-bushes; and a quince or so.
The old grape-arbor in the center, by
The pathway to the stable, with the sty
Behind it, and *upon* it, cootering flocks
Of pigeons,—and the cutest “martin-box”!—
Made like a sure-enough house—with roof, and doors
And windows in it, and veranda-floors
And balusters all round it—yes, and at
Each end a chimney—painted red at that
And penciled white, to look like little bricks;
And, to cap all the builder’s cunning tricks,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Two tiny little lightning-rods were run
Straight up their sides, and twinkled in the sun.
Who built it? Nay, no answer but a smile.—
It *may* be you can guess who, afterwhile.
Home in his stall, "Old Sorrel" munched his hay
And oats and corn, and switched the flies away,
In a repose of patience good to see,
And earnest of the gentlest pedigree.
With half pathetic eye sometimes he gazed
Upon the gambols of a colt that grazed
Around the edges of the lot outside,
And kicked at nothing suddenly, and tried
To act grown-up and graceful and high-bred,
But dropped, *k'whop!* and scraped the buggy-shed,
Leaving a tuft of woolly, foxy hair
Under the sharp-end of a gate-hinge there.
Then, all ignobly scrambling to his feet
And whinnying a whinny like a bleat,
He would pursue himself around the lot
And—do the whole thing over, like as not! . . .
Ah! what a life of constant fear and dread
And flop and squawk and flight the chickens led!
Above the fences, either side, were seen
The neighbor-houses, set in plots of green
Dooryards and greener gardens, tree and wall
Alike whitewashed, and order in it all:
The scythe hooked in the tree-fork; and the spade
And hoe and rake and shovel all, when laid
Aside, were in their places, ready for
The hand of either the possessor or
Of any neighbor, welcome to the loan
Of any tool he might not chance to own.

SUCH was the Child-World of the long-ago—
 The little world these children used to know :—
 Johnnty, the oldest, and the best, perhaps,
 Of the five happy little Hoosier chaps
 Inhabiting this wee world all their own.—
 Johnnty, the leader, with his native tone
 Of grave command—a general on parade
 Whose punctilious order was obeyed
 By his proud followers.

But Johnnty yet—
 After all serious duties—could forget
 The gravity of life to the extent,
 At times, of kindling much astonishment
 About him : With a quick, observant eye,
 And mind and memory, he could supply
 The tamest incident with liveliest mirth ;
 And at the most unlooked-for times on earth
 Was wont to break into some travesty
 On those around him—feats of mimicry
 Of this one's trick of gesture—that one's walk—
 Or this one's laugh—or that one's funny talk,—
 The way "the watermelon-man" would try
 His humor on town-folks that wouldn't buy ;—
 How he drove into town at morning—then
 At dusk (alas !) how he drove out again.

Though these divertissements of Johnnty's were
 Hailed with a hearty glee and relish, there
 Appeared a sense, on his part, of regret—
 A spirit of remorse that would not let

THE HOOSIER BOOK.

Him rest for days thereafter.—Such times he,
As some boy said, “jist got too overly
Blame’ good fer common boys like us, you know,
To ‘sociate with—’less’n we ‘ud go
And jine his church!”

Next after Johnty came
His little towhead brother, Bud by name.—
And O how white his hair was—and how thick
His face with freckles,—and his ears, how quick
And curious and intrusive!—And how pale
The blue of his big eyes;—and how a tale
Of Giants, Trolls or Fairies, bulged them still
Bigger and bigger!—and when “Jack” would kill
The old “Four-headed Giant,” Bud’s big eyes
Were swollen truly into giant-size.
And Bud was apt in make-believes—would hear
His Grandma talk or read, with such an ear
And memory of both subject and big words,
That he would take the book up afterwards
And feign to “read aloud,” with such success
As caused his truthful elders real distress.
But he *must* have *big words*—they seemed to give
Extremes range to the superlative—
That was his passion. “My Gran’ma,” he said,
One evening, after listening as she read
Some heavy old historical review—
With copious explanations thereunto
Drawn out by his inquiring turn of mind;—
“My Gran’ma she’s read *all books—ever’ kind*.
They is, ‘at tells all ‘bout the land an’ sea
An’ Nations of the Earth!—An’ she is the

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Historicul-est woman ever wuz!"
(Forgive the verse's chuckling as it does
In its erratic current.—Oftentimes
The little willowy water-brook of rhymes
Must falter in its music, listening to
The children laughing as they used to do.)

Who shall sing a simple ditty all about the Willow
Dainty-fine and delicate as any bending spray
That dandles high the happy bird that flutters there to trill a
Tremulously tender song of greeting to the May.

Bravest, too, of all the trees!—none to match your daring,
First of greens to greet the Spring and lead in leafy sheen;—
Ay, and you're the last—almost into winter wearing
Still the leaf of loyalty—still the badge of green.

Ah, my lovely Willow!—Let the Waters lilt your graces,—
They alone with limpid kisses lave your leaves above,
Flashing back your sylvan beauty, and in shady places
Peering up with glimmering pebbles, like the eyes of love.

Next, Maymie, with her hazy cloud of hair,
And the blue skies of eyes beneath it there.
Her dignified and "little lady" airs
Of never either romping up the stairs
Or falling down them; thoughtful every way
Of others first—The kind of child at play
That "gave up," for the rest, the ripest pear
Or peach or apple in the garden there
Beneath the trees where swooped the airy swing—
She pushing it, too glad for anything!
Or, in the character of hostess, she
Would entertain her friends delightfully

THE HOOSIER BOOK

In her playhouse,—with strips of carpet laid
Along the garden-fence within the shade
Of the old apple trees—where from next yard
Came the two dearest friends in her regard,
The little Crawford girls, Ella and Lu—
As shy and lovely as the lilies grew
In their idyllic home,—yet sometimes they
Admitted Bud and Alex to their play,
Who did their heavier work and helped them fix
To have a "Festibul"—and brought the bricks
And built the "stove," with a real fire and all,
And stove-pipe joint for chimney, looming tall
And wonderfully smoky—even to
Their childish aspirations, as it blew
And swooped and swirled about them till their sight
Was feverish even as their high delight.
Then Alex, with his freckles, and his freaks
Of temper, and the peach-bloom of his cheeks,
And "amber-colored hair"—his mother said
'Twas that, when others laughed and called it "red"
And Alex threw things at them—till they'd call
A truce, agreeing "'tuz n't red *ut-tall!*"
But Alex was affectionate beyond
The average child, and was extremely fond
Of the paternal relatives of his
Of whom he once made estimate like this:—
"I'm only got *two* brothers,—but my *Pa*
He's got most brothers'n you ever saw!—
He's got *seven* brothers!—Yes, an' they're *all* my
Seven Uncles!—Uncle John, an' Jim,—an' I
Got Uncle George, an' Uncle Andy, too,
An' Uncle Frank, an' Uncle Joe.—An' you

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Know Uncle Mart.—An', all but *him*, they're great
Big mens!—An' nen's Aunt Sarah—She makes eight!—
I'm got *eight* uncles!—'cept Aunt Sarah *can't*
Be ist my *uncle* 'cause she's ist my *aunt!*"

Then, next to Alex—and the last indeed
Of these five little ones of whom you read—
Was baby Lizzie, with her velvet lisp,—
As though her elfin lips had caught some wisp
Of floss between them as they strove with speech,
Which ever seemed just in, yet out of, reach—
Though what her lips missed, her dark eyes could say
With looks that made her meaning clear as day.

And, knowing now the children, you must know
The father and the mother they loved so:—
The father was a swarthy man, black-eyed,
Black-haired, and high of forehead; and, beside
The slender little mother, seemed in truth
A very king of men—since, from his youth,
To his hale manhood *now*—(worthy as *then*,—
A lawyer and a leading citizen
Of the proud little town and county-seat—
His hopes his neighbors', and their fealty sweet)—
He had known outdoor labor—rain and shine—
Bleak Winter, and bland Summer—foul and fine.
So Nature had ennobled him and set
Her symbol on him like a coronet:
His lifted brow, and frank, reliant face.—
Superior of stature as of grace,
Even the children by the spell were wrought

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Up to heroics of their simple thought,
And saw him, trim of build, and lithe and straight
And tall, almost, as at the pasture-gate
The towering ironweed the scythe had spared
For their sakes, when The Hired Man declared
It would grow on till it became a *tree*,
With cocoanuts and monkeys in—maybe!

Yet, though the children, in their pride and awe
And admiration of the father, saw
A being so exalted—even more
Like adoration was the love they bore
The gentle mother.—Her mild, plaintive face
Was purely fair, and haloed with a grace
And sweetness luminous when joy made glad
Her features with a smile; or saintly sad
As twilight, fell the sympathetic gloom
Of any childish grief, or as a room
Were darkened suddenly, the curtain drawn
Across the window and the sunshine gone.
Her brow, below her fair hair's glimmering strands,
Seemed meetest resting-place for blessing hands
Or holiest touches of soft finger-tips
And little rose-leaf cheeks and dewy lips.

Though heavy household tasks were pitiless,
No little waist or coat or checkered dress
But knew her needle's deftness; and no skill
Matched hers in shaping plait or flounce or frill;
Or fashioning, in complicate design,
All rich embroideries of leaf and vine,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

With tiniest twining tendril,—bud and bloom
And fruit, so like, one's fancy caught perfume
And dainty touch and taste of them, to see
Their semblance wrought in such rare verity.

Shrined in her sanctity of home and love,
And love's fond service and reward thereof,
Restore her thus, O blessed Memory!—
Throned in her rocking-chair, and on her knee
Her sewing—her work-basket on the floor
Beside her,—Spring-time through the open door
Balmily stealing in and all about
The room; the bees' dim hum, and the far shout
And laughter of the children at their play,
And neighbor children from across the way
Calling in gleeful challenge—save alone
One boy whose voice sends back no answering tone—
The boy, prone on the floor, above a book
Of pictures, with a rapt, ecstatic look—
Even as the mother's, by the selfsame spell,
Is lifted, with a light ineffable—
As though her senses caught no mortal cry.
But heard, instead, some poem going by.

The Child-heart is so strange a little thing—
So mild—so timorously shy and small,—
When *grown-up* hearts throb, it goes scampering
Behind the wall, nor dares peer out at all!—
It is the veriest mouse
That hides in any house—
So wild a little thing is any Child-heart.

*Child-heart!—mild heart!
Ho, my little wild heart!
Come up here to me out o' the dark,
Or let me come to you!*

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So lorn! at times the Child-heart needs must be,
With never one maturer heart for friend
And comrade, whose tear-ripened sympathy
And love might lend it comfort to the end,—
Whose yearnings, aches and stings,
Over poor little things
Were pitiful as ever any Child-heart.

Child-heart!—mild heart!
Ho, my little wild heart!
Come up here to me out o' the dark,
Or let me come to you!

Times, too, the little Child-heart must be glad—
Being so young, nor knowing, as we know,
The fact from fantasy, the good from bad,
The joy from woe, the—all that hurts us so!
What wonder then that thus
It hides away from us?—
So weak a little thing is any Child-heart!

Child-heart!—mild heart!
Ho, my little wild heart!
Come up here to me out o' the dark,
Or let me come to you!

Nay, little Child-heart, you have never need
To fear us;—we are weaker far than you—
'Tis we who should be fearful—we indeed
Should hide us, too, as darkly as you do,—
Safe, as yourself, withdrawn,
Hearing the World roar on
Too wilful, woeful, awful for the Child-heart!

Child-heart!—mild heart!
Ho, my little wild heart!
Come up here to me out o' the dark,
Or let me come to you!

The clock chats on confidingly; a rose
Taps at the window, as the sunlight throws.
A brilliant, jostling checkerwork of shine
And shadow, like a Persian-loom design,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Across the home-made carpet—fades,—and then
The dear old colors are themselves again.
Sounds drop in visiting from everywhere—
The bluebird's and the robin's trill are there,
Their sweet liquidity diluted some
By dewy orchard-spaces they have come:
Sounds of the town, too, and the great highway—
The Mover-wagons' rumble, and the neigh
Of over-traveled horses, and the bleat
Of sheep and low of cattle through the street—
A Nation's thoroughfare of hopes and fears,
First blazed by the heroic pioneers
Who gave up old-home idols and set face
Toward the unbroken West, to found a race
And tame a wilderness now mightier than
All peoples and all tracts American.
Blent with all outer sounds, the sounds within:—
In mild remoteness falls the household din
Of porch and kitchen: the dull jar and thump
Of churning; and the "glung-glung" of the pump,
With sudden pad and scurry of bare feet
Of little outlaws, in from field or street:
The clang of kettle,—rasp of damper-ring
And bang of cook-stove door—and everything
That jingles in a busy kitchen lifts
Its individual wrangling voice and drifts
In sweetest tinny, coppery, pewtery tone
Of music hungry ear has ever known
In wildest famished yearning and conceit
Of youth, to just cut loose and eat and eat!—
The zest of hunger still incited on
To childish desperation by long-drawn

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Breaths of hot, steaming, wholesome things that stew
And blubber, and up-tilt the pot-lids, too.
• Filling the sense with zestful rumors of
The dear old-fashioned dinners children love:
Redolent savorings of home-cured meats,
Potatoes, beans and cabbage; turnips, beets
And parsnips—rarest composite entire
That ever pushed a mortal child's desire
To madness by new-grated fresh, keen, sharp
Horseradish—tang that sets the lips awarp
And watery, anticipating all
The cloyed sweets of the glorious festival.—
Still add the cinnamony, spicy scents
Of clove, nutmeg, and myriad condiments
In like-alluring whiffs that prophesy
Of sweltering pudding, cake and custard-pie—
The swooning-sweet aroma haunting all
The house—up-stairs and down—porch, parlor, hall
And sitting-room—invading even where
The Hired Man sniffs it in the orchard-air,
And pauses in his pruning of the trees
To note the sun minutely and to—sneeze.

Then Cousin Rufus comes—the children hear
His hale voice in the old hall, ringing clear
As any bell. Always he came with song
Upon his lips and all the happy throng
Of echoes following him, even as the crowd
Of his admiring little kinsmen—proud
To have a cousin *grown*—and yet as young
Of soul and cheery as the songs he sung.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He was a student of the law—intent
Soundly to win success, with all it meant;
And so he studied—even as he played,—
With all his heart: And so it was he made
His gallant fight for fortune—through all stress
Of battle bearing him with cheeriness
And wholesome valor.

And the children had
Another relative who kept them glad
And joyous by his very merry ways—
As blithe and sunny as the summer days,—
Their father's youngest brother—Uncle Mart.
The old "Arabian Nights" he knew by heart—
"Baron Munchausen," too; and likewise "The
Swiss Family Robinson."—And when these three
Gave out, as he rehearsed them, he could go
Straight on in the same line—a steady flow
Of arabesque invention that his good
Old mother never clearly understood.
He *was* to be a *printer*—wanted, though,
To be an *actor*.—But the world was "show"
Enough for *him*,—theatric, airy, gay,—
Each day to him was jolly as a play.
And some poetic symptoms, too, in sooth,
Were certain.—And, from his apprentice youth,
He joyed in verse-quotations—which he took
Out of the old "Type Foundry Specimen Book."
He craved and courted most the favor of
The children.—They were foremost in his love;
And pleasing *them*; he pleased his own boy-heart
And kept it young and fresh in every part.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So was it he devised for them and wrought
To life his quaintest, most romantic thought:—
Like some lone castaway in alien seas,
He built a house up in the apple trees,
Out in the corner of the garden, where
No man-devouring native, prowling there,
Might pounce upon them in the dead o' night—
For lo, their little ladder, slim and light,
They drew up after them. And it was known
That Uncle Mart slipped up sometimes alone
And drew the ladder in, to lie and moon
Over some novel all the afternoon.
And one time Johnty, from the crowd below,—
Outraged to find themselves deserted so—
Threw bodily their old black cat up in
The airy fastness, with much yowl and din
Resulting, while a wild periphery
Of cat went circling to another tree,
And, in impassioned outburst, Uncle Mart
Loomed up, and thus relieved his tragic heart:

*"Hence, long-tailed, ebon-eyed, nocturnal ranger!
What led thee hither 'mongst the types and cases?
Didst thou not know that running midnight races
O'er standing types was fraught with imminent danger?
Did hunger lead thee—didst thou think to find
Some rich old cheese to fill thy hungry maw?
Vain hope! for none but literary jaw
Can masticate our cookery for the mind!"*

So likewise when, with lordly air and grace,
He strode to dinner, with a tragic face

THE HOOSIER BOOK

With ink-spots on it from the office, he
Would aptly quote more "Specimen-poetry—"
Perchance like "Labor's bread is sweet to eat,
(*Ahem!*) And toothsome is the toiler's meat."

Ah, could you see them *all*, at lull of noon!—
A sort of *boisterous* lull, with clink of spoon
And clatter of deflecting knife, and plate
Dropped saggingly, with its all-bounteous weight,
And dragged in place voraciously; and then
Pent exclamations, and the lull again.—
The garland of glad faces round the board—
Each member of the family restored
To his or her place, with an extra chair
Or two for the chance guests so often there.—

The father's farmer-client brought home from
The court room, though he "didn't *want* to come
Tel he jist saw he *hat* to!" he'd explain,
Invariably, time and time again,
To the pleased wife and hostess, as she pressed
Another 'cup of coffee on the guest.—
Or there was *Johnty's* special chum, perchance,
Or Bud's, or both—each childish countenance
Lit with a higher glow of youthful glee,
To be together thus unbrokenly,—
Jim Offut, or Eck Skinner, or George Carr—
The very nearest chums of Bud's these are,—
So, very probably, *one* of the three,
At least, is there with Bud, or *ought* to be.
Like interchange the town-boys each had known—
His playmate's dinner better than his own—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Yet blest that he was ever made to stay
At *Almon Keefer's*, any blessed day.
For any meal! . . . Visions of biscuits, hot
And flaky-perfect, with the golden blot
Of molten butter for the center, clear,
Through pools of clover-honey—*dear-o-dear!*—
With creamy milk for its divine "farewell":
And then, if any one delectable
Might yet exceed in sweetness, O restore
The cherry-cobbler of the days of yore
Made only by Al Keefer's mother!—Why,
The very thought of it ignites the eye
Of memory with rapture—cloys the lip
Of longing, till it seems to ooze and drip
With veriest juice and stain and overwaste
Of that most sweet delirium of taste
That ever visited the childish tongue,
Or proved, as now, the sweetest thing unsung.
Ah, Almon Keefer! what a boy you were,
With your back-tilted hat and careless hair,
And open, honest, fresh, fair face and eyes
With their all-varying looks of pleased surprise
And joyous interest in flower and tree,
And poising humming-bird, and maundering bee.
The fields and woods he knew; the tireless tramp
With gun and dog; and the night-fisher's camp—
No other boy, save Bee Lineback, had won
Such brilliant mastery of rod and gun.
Even in his earliest childhood had he shown
These traits that marked him as his father's own.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Dogs all paid Almon honor and bow-wowed
Allegiance, let him come in any crowd
Of rabbit-hunting town-boys, even though
His own dog "Sleuth" rebuked their acting so
With jealous snarls and growlings.

But the best
Of Almon's virtues—leading all the rest—
Was his great love of books, and skill as well
In reading them aloud, and by the spell
Thereof enthraling his mute listeners, as
They grouped about him in the orchard-grass,
Hinging their bare shins in the mottled shine
And shade, as they lay prone, or stretched supine
Beneath their favorite tree, with dreamy eyes
And Argo-fancies voyaging the skies.
"Tales of the Ocean" was the name of one
Old dog's-eared book that was surpassed by none
Of all the glorious list.—Its back was gone,
But its vitality went bravely on
In such delicious tales of land and sea
As may not ever perish utterly.
Of still more dubious caste, "Jack Sheppard" drew
Full admiration; and "Dick Turpin," too.
And, painful as the fact is to convey,
In certain lurid tales of their own day,
These boys found thieving heroes and outlaws
They hailed with equal fervor of applause;
"The League of the Miami"—why, the name
Alone was fascinating—is the same,
In memory, this venerable hour
Of moral wisdom shorn of all its power,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

As it unblushingly reverts to when
The old barn was "the Cave," and hears again
The signal blown, outside the buggy-shed—
The drowsy guard within uplifts his head,
And "*Who goes there?*" is called, in bated breath—
The challenge answered in a hush of death,—
"Sh!—'*Barney Gray!*'" And then "*What do you seek?*"
"*Stables of the League!*" the voice comes spent and weak,
For, ha! the *Law* is on the "Chieftain's" trail—
Tracked to his very lair!—Well, what avail?
The "secret entrance" opens—closes.—So
The "Robber-Captain" thus outwits his foe;
And, safe once more within his "cavern-halls,"
He shakes his clenched fist at the warped plank-walls
And mutters his defiance through the cracks
At the balked Enemy's retreating backs
As the loud horde flees pell-mell down the lane,
And—*Almon Keefer* is himself again!

Excepting few, they were not books indeed
Of deep import that Almon chose to read;—
Less fact than fiction.—Much he favored those—
If not in poetry, in hectic prose—
That made our native Indian a wild,
Feathered and fine-preened hero that a child
Could recommend as just about the thing
To make a god of, or at least a king.
Aside from Almon's own books—two or three—
His store of lore The Township Library
Supplied him weekly: All the books with "or"s—
Sub-titled—lured him—after "*Indian Wars,*"
And "*Life of Daniel Boone,*"—not to include
Some few books spiced with humor,—"*Robin Hood*"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And rare "Don Quixote."—And one time he took
"Dadd's Cattle Doctor." . . . How he hugged the book
And hurried homeward, with internal glee
And humorous spasms of expectancy!—
All this confession—as he promptly made
It, the day later, writhing in the shade
Of the old apple tree with Johnnty and
Bud, Noey Bixler, and The Hired Hand—
Was quite as funny as the book was not. . . .
O Wonderland of wayward Childhood! what
An easy, breezy realm of summer calm
And dreamy gleam and gloom and bloom and balm
Thou art!—The Lotus-Land the poet sung,
It is the Child-World while the heart beats young. . . .

While the heart beats young!—O the splendor of the Spring,
With all her dewy jewels on, is not so fair a thing!
The fairest, rarest morning of the blossom-time of May
Is not so sweet a season as the season of to-day
While Youth's diviner climate folds and holds us, close caressed,
As we feel our mothers with us by the touch of face and breast;—
Our bare feet in the meadows, and our fancies up among
The airy clouds of morning—while the heart beats young.

While the heart beats young and our pulses leap and dance,
With every day a holiday and life a glad romance.
We hear the birds with wonder, and with wonder watch their flight—
Standing still the more enchanted, both of hearing and of sight,
When they have vanished wholly,—for, in fancy, wing-to-wing
We fly to Heaven with them; and, returning, still we sing
The praises of this *lower* Heaven with tireless voice and tongue,
Even as the Master sanctions—while the heart beats young.

While the heart beats young!—While the heart beats young!
O green and gold old Earth of ours, with azure overhung
And looped with rainbows!—grant us yet this grassy lap of thine—
We would be still thy children, through the shower and the shine!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

So pray we, lisping, whispering, in childish love and trust,
With our beseeching hands and faces lifted from the dust
By fervor of the poem, all unwritten and unsung,
Thou givest us in answer, while the heart beats young.

Another hero of those youthful years
Returns, as Noey Bixler's name appears.
And Noey—if in any special way—
Was notably good-natured.—Work or play
He entered into with selfsame delight—
A wholesome interest that made him quite
As many friends among the old as young,—
So everywhere were Noey's praises sung.

And he was awkward, fat and overgrown,
With a round full-moon face, that fairly shone
As though to meet the simile's demand.
And, cumbrous though he seemed, both eye and hand
Were dowered with the discernment and deft skill
Of the true artisan: He shaped at will,
In his old father's shop, on rainy days,
Little toy-wagons, and curved-runner sleighs;
The trimmest bows and arrows—fashioned, too,
Of "seasoned timber," such as Noey knew
How to select, prepare, and then complete,
And call his little friends in from the street.
"The very *best* bow," Noey used to say,
"Hain't made o' ash ner hick'ry thataway!—
But you git *mulberry*—the *bearin'*-tree,
Now mind ye! and you fetch the piece to me,
And lemme git it *seasoned*; then, i gum!
I'll make a bow 'at you kin brag on some!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er—ef you can't git *mulberry*,—you bring
Me a' old *locus*' hitch-post, and i jing!
I'll make a bow o' *that* 'at *common* bows
Won't dast to pick on ner turn up their nose!"
And Noey knew the woods, and all the trees,
And thickets, plants and myriad mysteries
Of swamp and bottom-land. And he knew where
The ground-hog hid, and why located there.—
He knew all animals that burrowed, swam,
Or lived in tree-tops: And, by race and dam,
He knew the choicest, safest deeps wherein
Fish-traps might flourish nor provoke the sin
Of theft in some chance peeking, prying sneak,
Or town-boy, prowling up and down the creek.
All four-pawed creatures tamable—he knew
Their outer and their inner natures too;
While they, in turn, were drawn to him as by
Some subtle recognition of a tie
Of love, as true as truth from end to end,
Between themselves and this strange human friend.
The same with birds—he knew them every one,
And he could "name them, too, without a gun."
No wonder *Johnty* loved him, even to
The verge of worship.—Noey led him through
The art of trapping redbirds—yes, and taught
Him how to keep them when he had them caught—
What food they needed, and just where to swing
The cage, if he expected them to *sing*.

And *Bud* loved Noey, for the little pair
Of stilts he made him; or the stout old hair
Trunk Noey put on wheels, and laid a track
Of scantling-railroad for it in the back

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Part of the barn-lot; or the cross-bow, made
Just like a gun, which deadly weapon laid
Against his shoulder as he aimed, and—"Spring!"
He'd hear the rusty old nail zoon and sing—
And *zip!* your Mr. Bluejay's wing would drop
A farewell-feather from the old tree-top!

And *Maymie* loved him, for the very small
But perfect carriage for her favorite doll—
A *lady's* carriage—not a *baby-cab*,—
But oil-cloth top, and two seats, lined with drab
And trimmed with white lace-paper from a case
Of shaving-soap his uncle bought some place
At auction once.

And *Alex* loved him yet
The best, when Noey brought him, for a pet,
A little flying-squirrel, with great eyes—
Big as a child's: And, childlike otherwise,
It was at first a timid, tremulous, coy,
Retiring little thing that dodged the boy
And tried to keep in Noey's pocket;—till,
In time, responsive to his patient will,
It became wholly docile, and content
With its new master, as he came and went,—
The squirrel clinging flatly to his breast,
Or sometimes scampering its craziest
Around his body spirally, and then
Down to his very heels and up again.

And *Little Lizzie* loved him, as a bee
Loves a great ripe red apple—utterly.
For Noey's ruddy morning-face she drew
The window-blind, and tapped the window, too;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Afar she hailed his coming, as she heard
His tuneless whistling—sweet as any bird
It seemed to her, the one lame bar or so
Of old “Wait for the Wagon”—hoarse and low
The sound was,—so that, all about the place,
Folks joked and said that Noey “whistled bass”—
The light remark originally made
By Cousin Rufus, who knew notes, and played
The flute with nimble skill, and taste as well,
And, critical as he was musical,
Regarded Noey’s constant whistling thus
“Phenominally unmelodious.”
Likewise when Uncle Mart, who shared the love
Of jest with Cousin Rufus hand-in-glove,
Said “Noey couldn’t whistle ‘*Bonny Doon*’
Even! and, *he’d* bet, couldn’t carry a tune
If it had handles to it!”

—But forgive

The deviations here so fugitive,
And turn again to Little Lizzie, whose
High estimate of Noey we shall choose
Above all others.—And to her he was
Particularly lovable because
He laid the woodland’s harvest at her feet.—
He brought her wild strawberries, honey-sweet
And dewy-cool, in mats of greenest moss
And leaves, all woven over and across
With tender, biting “tongue-grass,” and “sheep-sour,”
And twin-leaved beech-mast, pranked with bud and flower
Of every gipsy-blossom of the wild,
Dark, tangled forest, dear to any child.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

All these in season. Nor could barren, drear,
White and stark-featured Winter interfere
With Noey's rare resources: Still the same
He blithely whistled through the snow and came
Beneath the window with a Fairy sled;
And Little Lizzie, bundled heels-and-head,
He took on such excursions of delight
As even "Old Santy" with his reindeer might
Have envied her! And, later, when the snow
Was softening toward Spring-time and the glow
Of steady sunshine smote upon it,—then
Came the magician Noey yet again—
While all the children were away a day
Or two at Grandma's!—and behold when they
Got home once more;—there, towering taller than
The doorway—stood a mighty, old Snow-Man!

A thing of peerless art—a masterpiece
Doubtless unmatched by even classic Greece
In heyday of Praxiteles.—Alone
It loomed in lordly grandeur all its own.
And steadfast, too, for weeks and weeks it stood,
The admiration of the neighborhood
As well as of the children Noey sought
Only to honor in the work he wrought.
The traveler paid it tribute, as he passed
Along the highway—paused and, turning, cast
A lingering, last look—as though to take
A vivid print of it, for memory's sake,
To lighten all the empty, aching miles
Beyond with brighter fancies, hopes and smiles.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The cynic put aside his biting wit
And tacitly declared in praise of it;
And even the apprentice-poet of the town
Rose to impassioned heights, and then sat down
And penned a panegyric scroll of rhyme
That made the Snow-Man famous for all time.

And though, as now, the ever warmer sun
Of summer had so melted and undone
The perishable figure that—alas!—
Not even in dwindled white against the grass
Was left its latest and minutest ghost,
The children yet—*materially*, almost—
Beheld it—circled round it hand-in-hand—
(Or rather round the place it used to stand)—
With “Ring-a-round-a-rosy! Bottle full
O’ posey!” and, with shriek and laugh, would pull
From seeming contact with it—just as when
It was the *real-est* of old Snow-Men.

Even in such a scene of senseless play
The children were surprised one summer day
By a strange man who called across the fence,
Inquiring for their father’s residence;
And, being answered that this was the place,
Opened the gate, and, with a radiant face,
Came in and sat down with them in the shade.
And waited—till the absent father made
His noon appearance, with a warmth and zest
That told he had no ordinary guest
In this man whose low-spoken name he knew
At once, demurring as the stranger drew

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A stuffy note-book out, and turned and set
A big fat finger on a page, and let
The writing thereon testify instead
Of further speech. And as the father read
All silently, the curious children took
Exacting inventory both of book
And man:—He wore a long-napped white fur hat
Pulled firmly on his head, and under that
Rather long silvery hair, or iron-gray—
For he was not an old man,—anyway,
Not beyond sixty. And he wore a pair
Of square-framed spectacles—or rather there
Were two more than a pair,—the extra two
Flared at the corners, at the eyes' side-view,
In as redundant vision as the eyes
Of grasshoppers or bees or dragon-flies.
Later the children heard the father say
He was "A Noted Traveler," and would stay
Some days with them—In which time host and guest
Discussed, alone, in deepest interest,
Some vague, mysterious matter that defied
The wistful children, loitering outside
The spare-room door. There Bud acquired a quite
New list of big words—such as "Disunite,"
And "Shibboleth," and "Aristocracy,"
And "Juggernaut," and "Squatter Sovereignty,"
And "Anti-slavery," "Emancipate,"
"Irrepressible Conflict," and "The Great
Battle of Armageddon"—obviously
A pamphlet brought from Washington, D. C.,
And spread among such friends as might occur
Of like views with "The Noted Traveler."

253 *Maymie's Story of Red Riding-Hood*

W'Y, one time wuz a little-weenty dirf,
 An' she wuz named Red Riding-Hood, 'cause her
 Her *Ma* she maked a little red cloak fer her
 'At turnt up over her head—An' it 'uz all
 Ist one piece o' red cardinal 'at's like
 The drate-long stockin's the store-keepers has.—
 Oh! it 'uz purtiest cloak in all the world
 An' *all* this town er anywheres they is!
 An' so, one day, her *Ma* she put it on
 Red Riding-Hood, she did—one day, she did—
 An' it 'uz *Sund'y*—'cause the little cloak
 It 'uz too nice to wear ist *ever* day
 An' *all* the time!—An' so her *Ma*, she put
 It on Red Riding-Hood—an' telled her not
 To dit no dirt on it ner dit it mussed
 Ner nothin'! An'—an'—nen her *Ma* she dot
 Her little basket out, 'at Old Kriss brought
 Her wunst—one time, he did. And nen she fill'
 It full o' whole lots an' 'bundance o' dood things t' eat
 (Allus my Dran'ma *she* says "bundance," too.)
 An' so her *Ma* fill' little Red Riding-Hood's
 Nice basket all ist full o' dood things t' eat,
 An' tell her take 'em to her old Dran'ma—
 An' not to *spill* 'em, neever—'cause ef she
 'Ud stump her toe an' spill 'em, her Dran'ma
 She'll haf to *punish* her!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' nen—An' so

Little Red Riding-Hood she p'omised she
'Ud be all careful nen an' cross' her heart
'At she won't run an' spill 'em all fer six—
Five—ten—two-hundred-bushel-dollars-gold!
An' nen she kiss her Ma doo'-by an' went
A-skippin' off—away fur off frough the
Big woods, where her Dran'ma she live at—No!—
She didn't do *a-skippin'*, like I said:—
She ist went *walkin'*—careful-like an' slow—
Ist like a little lady—walkin' 'long
As all polite an' nice—an' slow—an' straight—
An' turn her toes—ist like she's marchin' in
The Sund'y-School k-session!

An'—an'—so

She 'uz a-doin' along—an' doin' along—
On frough the drate-big woods—'cause her Dran'ma
She livē 'way, 'way fur off frough the big woods
From *her* Ma's house. So when Red Riding-Hood
Dit to do there, she allus have most fun—
When she do frough the drate-big woods, you know—
'Cause she ain't feard a bit o' anything!
An' so she sees the little hoppty-birds
'At's in the trees, an' flyin' all around,
An' singin' dlad as ef their parunts said
They'll take 'em to the magic-lantern show!
An' she 'ud pull the purty flowers an' things
A-growin' round the stumps—An' she 'ud ketch
The purty butterflies, an' drasshoppers,
An' stick pins frough 'em—No!—I ist *said* that!—
'Cause she's too dood an' kind an' 'bedient

THE HOOSIER BOOK

To *hurt* things thataway.—She'd *catch* 'em, though,
An' ist *play* wiv 'em ist a little while,
An' nen she'd let 'em fly away, she would,
An' ist skip on ad'in to her Dran'mas.

An' so, while she 'uz doin' 'long an' 'long,
First thing you know they 'uz a drate-big old
Mean wicked Wolf jumped out 'at wanted t' eat
Her up, but *dassent* to—'cause wite clos't there
They wuz a Man a-choppin' wood, an' you
Could *hear* him.—So the old Wolf he 'uz *feard*
Only to ist be *kind* to her.—So he
Ist 'tended-like he wuz dood friends to her
An' says "Dood morning, little Red Riding-Hood!"—
All ist as kind!

An' nen Riding-Hood
She say "Dood morning," too,—all kind an' nice—
Ist like her Ma she learn'—No!—mustn't say
"Learn," 'cause "*Learn*" it's unproper.—Sō she say
It like her Ma she "*teached*" her.—An'—so she
Ist says "Dood morning" to the Wolf—'cause she
Don't know ut-tall 'at he's a *wicked* Wolf
An' want to eat her up!

An' nen old Wolf smile
An' say, so kind: "Where air you doin' at?"
Nen little Red Riding-Hood she say: "I'm doin'
To my Dran'ma's, 'cause my Ma say I might."
Nen, when she tell him that, the old Wolf he
Ist turn an' light out frough the big thick woods,
Where she can't see him any more. An' so
She think he's went to *his* house—but he hain't,—
He's went to her Dran'ma's, to be there first—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' *ketch* her, ef she don't watch mighty sharp
What she's about!

An' nen when the old Wolf
Dit to her Dran'ma's house, he's purty smart,—
An' so he 'tend-like *he's* Red Riding-Hood,
An' knock at th' door. An' Riding-Hood's Dran'ma
She's sick in bed an' can't come to the door
An' open it. So th' old Wolf knock' *two* times.
An' nen Red Riding-Hood's Dran'ma she says,
"Who's there?" she says. An' old Wolf 'tends-like *he's*
Little Red Riding-Hood, you know, an' make'
His voice soun' ist like hers, an' says: "It's me,
Dran'ma—an' I'm Red Riding-Hood an' I'm
Ist come to *see* you."

Nen her old Dran'ma
She think it *is* little Red Riding-Hood,
An' so she say: "Well, come in nen an' make
You'se'f at home," she says, "'cause I'm down sick
In bed, and got the 'ralgia, so's I can't
Dit up an' let ye in."

An' so th' old Wolf
Ist march' in nen an' shet the door ad'in,
An' *drowl*, he did, an' *splunge* up on the bed
An' et up old Miz Riding-Hood 'fore she
Could put her specs on an' see who it wuz.—
An' so she never knowed *who* et her up!
An' nen the wicked Wolf he ist put on
Her nightcap, an' all covered up in bed—
Like he wuz *her*, you know.

Nen, purty soon
Here come along little Red Riding-Hood,
An' *she* knock' at the door. An' old Wolf 'tend-

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Like *he's* her Dran'ma; an' he say, "Who's there?"
Ist like her Dran'ma say, you know. An' so
Little Red Riding-Hood she say: "It's *me*,
Dran'ma—an' I'm Red Riding-Hood and I'm
Ist come to *see* you."

An' nen old Wolf nen
He cough an' say: "Well, come in nen an' make
You'se'f at home," he says, "'cause I'm down sick
In bed, an' got the 'ralgia, so's I can't
Dit up an' let ye in."

An' so she think
It's her Dran'ma a-talkin'.—So she ist
Open' the door an' come in, an' set down
Her basket, an' taked off her things, an' bringed
A chair an' clumbed up on the bed, wite by
The old big Wolf she thinks is her Dran'ma—
Only she thinks the old Wolf's dot whole lots
More bigger ears, an' lots more whiskers, too,
Than her Dran'ma; an' so Red Riding-Hood
She's kind o' skeered a little. So she says
"Oh, Dran'ma, what *big eyes* you dot!" An' nen
The old Wolf says: "They're ist big thataway
'Cause I'm so dlad to see you!"

Nen she says,—
"Oh, Dran'ma, what a drate-big nose you dot!"
Nen th' old Wolf says: "It's ist big thataway
Ist 'cause I smell the dood things 'at you bringed
Me in the basket!"

An' nen Riding-Hood
She says, "Oh-me-oh-*my*! Dran'ma! what big
White long sharp teeth you dot!"

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Nen old Wolf says:

"Yes—an' they're thataway,"—an' drowled—

"They're thataway," he says, "to *eat* you wiv!"

An' nen he ist *jump* at her.—

But she *scream'*—

An' *scream'*, she did.—So's 'at the Man

'At wuz a-choppin' wood, you know,—*he* hear,

An' come a-runnin' in there wiv his ax;

An', 'fore the old Wolf know' what he's about,

He split his old brains out an' killed him s' quick

It make' his head swim!—An' Red Riding-Hood

She wuzn't hurt at all!

An' the big Man

He tooked her all safe home, he did, an' tell

Her Ma she's all right an' ain't hurt at all

An' old Wolf's dead an' killed—an' everything!—

So her Ma wuz so tickled an' so proud,

She divyed *him* all the dood things t' eat they wuz

'At's in the basket, an' she tell him 'at

She's much oblige', an' say to "call ad'in."

An' story's honest *truth*—an' all *so*, too!

254

Bud's Fairy Tale

SOME peoples thinks they ain't no Fairies *now*
No more yet!—But they *is*, I bet! 'Cause ef
They *wuzn't* Fairies, nen I' like to know
Who'd wite 'bout Fairies in the books, an' tell
What Fairies *does*, an' how their *picture* looks,
An' all an' ever'thing! W'y, ef they don't
Be Fairies any more, nen little boys

THE HOOSIER BOOK

'Ud ist *sleep* when they go to sleep an' won't
Have ist no dweams at all,—'cause Fairies—*good*
Fairies—they're a-purpose to make dweams!
But they *is* Fairies—an' I *know* they *is*!
'Cause one time wunst, when it's all Summer-time,
An' don't haf to be no fires in the stove
Er fireplace to keep warm wiv—ner don't haf
To wear old scwatchy flannen shirts at all,
An' ain't no fweeze—ner cold—ner snow!—An'—an'
Old skweeky twees got all the gween leaves on
An' ist keeps noddin', noddin' all the time,
Like they 'uz lazy an' a-twyin' to go
To sleep an' couldn't, 'cause the wind won't quit
A-blowin' in 'em, an' the birds won't stop
A-singin', so's they *kin*.—But twees *don't* sleep,
I guess! But *little boys* sleeps—an' *dweams*, too.—
An' that's a sign they's Fairies.

So, one time,
When I be'n playin' "Store" wunst over in
The shed of their old stable, an' Ed Howard
He maked me quit a-bein' pardners, 'cause
I dwinked the 'tend-like sody-water up
An' et the shore-nuff cwackers,—w'y, nen I
Clumbed over in our garden where the gwapes
Wuz purt' nigh ripe: An' I wuz ist a-layin'
There on th' old cwoked seat 'at Pa maked in
Our arber,—an' so I 'uz layin' there
A-whittlin' 'beets wiv my new dog-knife, an'
A-lookin' wite up thue the twimble leaves—
An' wuzn't 'sleep at all!—An'-sir!—first thing
You know, a little *Fairy* hopped out there!
A *leetle-teenty Fairy*!—*hope-may-die*!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' he look' down at me, he did—an' he
Ain't bigger'n a *yellerbird*!—an' he
Say "Howdy-do!" he did—an' I could *hear*
Him—ist as *plain*!

Nen I say "Howdy-do!"

An' he say "*I'm* all hunky, Nibsey; how
Is *your* folks comin' on?"

An' nen I say

"My name ain't '*Nibsey*,' neever—my name's *Bud*.—
An' what's *your* name?" I says to him.

An' he

Ist laugh an' say, "*'Bud's'* awful *funny* name!"
An' he ist laid back on a big bunch o' gwapes
An' laugh' an' laugh', he did—like somebody
'Uz tick-el-un his feet!

An' nen I say—

"What's *your* name," nen I say, "afore you bu'st
Yo'se'f a-laughin' 'bout *my* name?" I says.
An' nen he dwy up laughin'—kind o' mad—
An' say, "*W'y*, *my* name's *Squidjicum*," he says.
An' nen I laugh an' say—"Gee! what a name!"
An' when I make fun of his name, like that,
He ist git awful mad an' spunky, an'
'Fore you know, he ist gwabbed holt of a vine—
A big long vine 'at's danglin' up there, an'
He ist helt on wite tight to that, an' down
He swung quick past my face, he did, an' ist
Kicked at me hard's he could!

But I'm too quick

Fer *Mr. Squidjicum*! I ist weached out
An' ketched him, in my hand—an' helt him, too,
An' *squeezed* him, ist like little wobins when

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They can't fly yet an' git flopped out their nest.
An' nen I turn him all wound over, an'
Look at him clos't, you know—wite clos't,—'cause ef
He is a Fairy, w'y, I want to see
The *wings* he's got.—But he's dwessed up so fine
'At I can't *see* no wings.—An' all the time
He's twyin' to kick me yet: An' so I take
F'esh holts an' *squeeze* ag'in—an' harder, too;
An' I says, "*Hold up, Mr. Squidjicum!*—
You're kickin' the wrong man!" I says; an' nen
I ist *squeeze*' him, purt' nigh my *best*, I did—
An' I heerd somepin' bu'st!—An' nen he cwied
An' says, "You better look out what you're doin'!—
You' bu'st my spiderweb-suspenners, an'
You' got my woseleaf-coat all cwinkled up
So's I can't go to old Miss Hoodjicum's
Tea-party, 's afternoon!"

An' nen I says—
"Who's 'old Miss Hoodjicum'?" I says
An' he
Says, "Ef you lemme loose I'll fell you."

So
I helt the little skeezics 'way fur out
In one hand—so's he can't jump down t' th' ground
Wivout a-gittin' all stove up: an' nen
I says, "You're loose now.—Go ahead an' tell
'Bout the 'tea-party' where you're goin' at
So awful fast!" I says.

An' nen he say,—
"No use to *tell* you 'bout it, 'cause you won't
Believe it, 'less you go there your own se'f
An' see it wiv your own two eyes!" he says.

THE HQOSIER BOOK

An' *he* says: "Ef you lemme *shore-nuff* loose,
An' p'omise 'at you'll keep wite still, an' won't
Tetch nothin' 'at you see—an' never tell
Nobody in the world—an' lemme loose—
W'y, nen I'll *take* you there!"

But I says, "Yes
An' ef I let you loose, you'll *run*!" I says.
An' he says, "No, I won't!—I hope-may-die!"
Nen I says, "Cwoss your heart you won't!"

An' he
Ist cwoss his heart; an' nen I weach an' set
The little feller up on a long vine—
An' he 'uz so tickled to git loose ag'in,
He gwab' the vine wiv boff his little hands
An' ist take an' turn in, he did, an' skin
'Bout forty-'leben cats!

Nen when he git
Thue whirlin' wound the vine, an' set on top
Of it ag'in, w'y, nen his "woseleaf-coat"
He bwag so much about, it's ist all tored
Up, an' ist hangin' strips an' rags—so he
Look like his Pa's a dwunkard. An' so nen
When he see what he's done—a-actin' up
So smart,—he's awful mad, I guess; an' ist
Pout out his lips an' twis' his little face
Ist ugly as he kin, an' set an' tear
His whole coat off—an' sleeves an' all.—An' nen
He wad it all togevver an' ist *throw*
It at me ist as hard as he kin dwive!
An' when I weach to ketch him, an' 'uz goin'
To give him 'nuvver squeezin', *he ist flewed*
Clean up on top the arber!—'Cause, you know,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

They *wuz* wings on him—when he tored his *coat*
Clean off—they *wuz* wings *under there*. But they
Wuz purty wobbly-like an' wouldn't work
Hardly at all—'Cause purty soon, when I
Th'owed clods at him, an' sticks, an' got him shooed
Down off o' there, he come a-floppin' down
An' lit k-bang! on our old chicken-coop,
An' ist laid there a-whimper'n' like a child!
An' I tiptoed up wite clos't, an' I says, "What's
The matter wiv ye, Squidjicum?"

An' he

Says: "Dog-gone! when my wings gits stwaight ag'in,
Where you all *cwumpled* 'em," he says, "I bet
I'll ist fly clean away an' won't take you
To old Miss Hoodjicum's at all!" he says.
An' nen I ist weach out wite quick, I did,
An' gwab the sassy little snipe ag'in—
Nen tooked my top-string an' tie down his wings
So's he *can't* fly, 'less'n I want him to!
An' nen I says: "Now, Mr. Squidjicum,
You better ist light out," I says, "to old
Miss Hoodjicum's, an' show *me* how to git
There, too," I says; "er ef you don't," I says,
"I'll climb up wiv you on our buggy-shed
An' push you off!" I says.

An' nen he say

All wight, he'll show me there; an' tell me nen
To set him down wite easy on his feet,
An' loosen up the stwing a little where
It cut him under th' arms. An' nen he says,
"Come on!" he says; an' went a-limpin' 'long
The garden-path—an' limpin' 'long an' 'long

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Tel—purty soon he come on 'long to where's
A grea'-big cabbage-leaf. An' he stoop down
An' say, "Come on inunder here wiv me!"
So I stoop down an' crawl inunder there,
Like he say.

An' inunder there's a grea'-
Big clod, they is—a' awful grea'-big clod!
An' nen he says, "*Woll this-here clod away!*"
An' so I woll' the clod away. An' nen
It's all wet, where the dew'z inunder where
The old clod wuz,—an' nen the Fairy he
Git on the wet-place: Nen he say to me,
"Git on the wet-place, too!" An' nen he say,
"Now hold yer breff an' shet yer eyes!" he says,
"Tel I say *Squinchy-winchy!*" Nen he say—
Somepin' *in Dutch*, I guess.—An' nen I felt
Like we 'uz sinkin' down—an' sinkin' down!—
Tel purty soon the little Fairy weach
An' pinch my nose an' yell at me an' say,
"*Squinchy-winchy! Look wherever you please!*"
Nen when I looked—Oh! they 'uz purtyest place
Down there you ever saw in all the World!—
They 'uz ist *flowers* an' *woses*—yes, an' *twees*
Wiv *blossoms* on an' *big wipe apples* boff!
An' butterflies, they wuz—an' hummin'-birds—
An' *yellerbirds* an' *bluebirds*—yes, an' *wed!*—
An' ever'wheres an' all awound 'uz vines
Wiv ripe p'serve-pears on 'em!—Yes, an' all
An' ever'thing 'at's ever gwowin' in
A garden—er canned up—all wipe at wunst!—
It wuz ist like a garden—only it
'Uz *little bit* o' garden—'bout big wound

THE HOOSIER BOOK

As ist our twun'el-bed is.—An' all wound
An' wound the little garden's a gold fence—
An' little gold gate, too—an' ash-hopper
'At's all gold, too—an' ist full o' gold ashes!
An' wite in th' middle o' the garden wuz
A little gold house, 'at's ist 'bout as big
As ist a bird-cage is: An' *in* the house
They 'uz whole-lots *more* Fairies there—'cause I
Picked up the little house, 'an' peeked in at
The winders, an' I see 'em all in there
Ist *buggin'* wound! An' Mr. Squidjicum
He twy to make me quit, but I gwab *him*,
An' poke him down the chimbly, too, I did!—
An' y'ort to see *him* hop out 'mongst 'em there!
Ist like he 'uz the boss an' ist got back!—
"Hain't ye got on them-air dew-dumplin's yet?"
He says.

An' they says no.

An' nen he says—

"Better git at 'em nen!" he says, *"wite quick—*
'Cause old Miss Hoodjicum's a-comin'!"

Nen

They all set wound a little gold tub—an'
All 'menced a-peelin' dewdwops, ist like they
'Uz *peaches*.—An', it looked so funny, I
Ist laugh' out loud, an' *dwopped* the little house,—
An' 't bu'sted like a soap-bubble!—An' 't skeered
Me so, I—I—I—I,—it skeered me so,—
I—ist *waked* up.—No! I *ain't* be'n *asleep*
An' *dweam* it all, like *you* think,—but it's shore
Fer-certain *fact* an' cwiss my heart it is!

The Bear Story

THAT ALEX "IST MAKED UP HIS-OWN-SE'F"

W'Y, WUNST they wuz a Little Boy went out
 In the woods to shoot a bear. So, he went out
 'Way in the grea'-big woods—he did.—An' he
 Wuz goin' along—an' goin' along, you know,
 An' purty soon he heerd somepin' go "*Wooh!*"
 Ist thataway—"Woo-oo!" An' he wuz *skeered*,
 He wuz. An' so he runned an' clumbed a tree—
 A grea'-big tree, he did,—a sicka-more tree.
 An' nen he heerd it ag'in: an' he looked round,
 An' 't'uz a Bear!—a grea'-big, shore-nuff Bear!—
 No: 't'uz two Bears, it wuz—two grea'-big Bears—
 One of 'em wuz—ist *one's* a grea'-big Bear.—
 But they ist *boff* went "*Wooh!*"—An' here *they* come
 To climb the tree an' git the Little Boy
 An' eat him up!

An' nen the Little Boy
 He 'uz *skeered* worse'n ever! An' here come
 The grea'-big Bear a-climbin' th' tree to git
 The Little Boy an' eat him up—Oh, *no!*—
 It 'uzn't the *Big* Bear 'at clumb the tree—
 It 'uz the *Little* Bear. So here *he* come
 Climbin' the tree—an' climbin' the tree! Nen when
 He git wite clos't to the Little Boy, w'y, nen
 The Little Boy he ist pulled up his gun
 An' *shot* the Bear, he did, an' killed him dead!
 An' nen the Bear he falled clean on down out

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The tree—away clean to the ground, he did—
Spling-splung! he falled *plum* down, an' killed him,
too!

An' lit wite side o' where the *Big Bear's* at.

An' nen the *Big Bear's* awful mad, you bet!—
'Cause—'cause the *Little Boy* he shot his gun
An' killed the *Little Bear*.—'Cause the *Big Bear*
He—he 'uz the *Little Bear's* Papa.—An' so here
He come to climb the big old tree an' git
The *Little Boy* an' eat him up! An' when
The *Little Boy* he saw the *grea'-big Bear*
A-comin', he 'uz badder skeered, he wuz,
Than *any* time! An' so he think he'll climb
Up *higher*—'way up higher in the tree
Than the old *Bear* kin climb, you know.—But he—
He *can't* climb higher 'an old *Bears* kin climb,—
'Cause *Bears* kin climb up higher in the trees
Than any little *Boys* in all the *Wo-r-r-ld*!

An' so here come the *grea'-big Bear*, he did,—
A-climbin' up—an' up the tree, to git
The *Little Boy* an' eat him up! An' so
The *Little Boy* he clumbed on higher, an' higher,
An' higher up the tree—an' higher—an' higher—
An' higher'n iss-here *house* is!—An' here come
Th' old *Bear*—clos'ter to him all the time!—
An' nen—first thing you know,—when th' old *Big*
Bear

Wuz wite clos't to him—nen the *Little Boy*
Ist jabbed his gun wite in the old *Bear's* mouf

THE HOOSIER BOOK

An' shot an' killed him dead!—No; I *fergot*,—
He didn't shoot the grea'-big Bear at all—
'Cause *they 'uz no load in the gun*, you know—
'Cause when he shot the *Little Bear*, w'y, nen
No load 'uz any more nen *in the gun*!

But th' Little Boy clumbed *higher* up, he did—
He clumbed *lots* higher—an' on up *higher*—an' higher
An' *higher*—tel he ist *can't* climb no *higher*,
'Cause nen the limbs 'uz all so little, 'way
Up in the teeny-weeny tip-top of
The tree, they'd break down wiv him ef he don't
Be keerful! So he stop an' think: An' nen
He look around—An' here come the old Bear!
An' so the Little Boy make up his mind
He's got to ist git out o' there *some* way!—
'Cause here come the old Bear!—so clos't, his bref's
Purt' nigh so's he kin feel how hot it is
Ag'inst his bare feet—ist like old "Ring's" bref
When he's be'n out a-huntin' an' 's all tired.
So when th' old Bear's so clos't—the Little Boy
Ist gives a grea'-big jump fer '*nother* tree—
No!—no, he don't do that!—I tell you what
The Little Boy does:—W'y, nen—w'y, he—Oh, *yes*—
The Little Boy *he finds a hole up there*
'*At's in the tree*—an' climbs in there an' *hides*—
An' *nen* the old Bear can't find the Little Boy
At all!—But purty soon the old Bear finds
The Little Boy's *gun* 'at's up there—'cause the *gun*
It's too *tall* to tooked wiv him in the hole.
So, when the old Bear find' the *gun*, he knows

THE HOOSIER BOOK

The Little Boy ist *hid* 'round *somers* there,—
An' th' old Bear 'gins to snuff an' sniff around,
An' sniff an' snuff around—so's he kin find
Out where the Little Boy's hid at.—An' nen—nen—
Oh, *yes!*—W'y, purty soon the old Bear climbs
'Way out on a big limb—a grea'-long limb,—
An' nen the Little Boy climbs out the hole
An' takes his ax an' chops the limb off! . . . Nen
The old Bear falls *k-splunge!* clean to the ground
An' bu'st an' kill hisse'f plum dead, he did!

An' nen the Little Boy he git his gun
An' 'menced a-climbin' down the tree ag'in—
No!—no, he *didn't* git his *gun*—'cause when
The *Bear* falled, nen the *gun* falled, too—An' broked
It all to pieces, too!—An' *nicest* gun!—
His Pa ist buyed it!—An' the Little Boy
Ist cried, he did; an' went on climbin' down
The tree—an' climbin' down—an' climbin' down!—
An'-sir! when he 'uz purt' nigh down,—w'y, nen
The old Bear he jumped up ag'in!—an' he
Ain't dead at all—ist 'tendin' thataway,
So he kin git the Little Boy an' eat
Him up! But the Little Boy he 'uz too smart
To climb clean *down* the tree.—An' the old Bear
He can't climb *up* the tree no more—'cause when
He fell, he broke one of his—He broke *all*
His legs!—an' nen he *couldn't* climb! But he
Ist won't go 'way an' let the Little Boy
Come down out of the tree. An' the old Bear
Ist growls 'round there, he does—ist growls an' goes

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"*Wooh!—woo-oooh!*" all the time! An' Little Boy
He haf to stay up in the tree—all night—
An' 'thout no *supper* neever!—Only they
Wuz *apples* on the tree!—An' Little Boy
Et apples—ist all night—an' cried—an' cried!
Nen when 't 'uz morning th' old Bear went "*Wooh!*"
Ag'in, an' try to climb up in the tree
An' git the Little Boy.—But he *can't*
Climb t' save his *soul*, he can't—An' *oh!* he's *mad!*—
He ist tear up the ground! an' go "*Woo-oooh!*"
An'—*Oh, yes!*—purty soon, when morning's come
All *light*—so's you kin *see*, you know,—w'y, nen
The old Bear finds the Little Boy's *gun*, you know,
'At's on the ground.—(An' it ain't broke at all—
I ist *said* that!) An' so the old Bear think
He'll take the gun an' *shoot* the Little Boy:—
But *Bears they* don't know much 'bout shootin' guns:
So when he go to shoot the Little Boy,
The old Bear got the *other* end the gun
Ag'in' his shoulder, 'stid o' *th' other* end—
So when he try to shoot the Little Boy,
It shot *the Bear*, it did—an' killed him dead!
An' nen the Little Boy clumb down the tree
An' chopped his old woolly head off.—Yes, an' killed
The *other* Bear ag'in, he did—an' killed
All *boff* the bears, he did—an' tuk 'em home
An' *cooked* 'em, too, an' *et* 'em!
—An' that's all.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

256

Uncle Mart's Poem

THE OLD SNOW MAN

HO! the old Snow-Man
That Noey Bixler made!
He looked as fierce and sassy
As a soldier on parade!—
'Cause Noey, when he made him,
While we all wuz gone, you see,
He made him, jist a-purpose,
Jist as fierce as he could be!—
But when we all got *ust* to him,
Nobody wuz afraid
Of the old Snow-Man
That Noey Bixler made!

'Cause Noey told us 'bout him
And what he made him fer:—
He'd come to feed, that morning,
He found we wuzn't here;
And so the notion struck him,
When we all come taggin' home
'Tud *s'prise* us ef a' old Snow-Man
'Ud meet us when we come!
So, when he'd fed the stock, and milked,
And be'n back home, and chopped
His wood, and et his breakfast, he
Jist grabbed his mitts and hopped
Right in on that-air old Snow-Man
That he laid out he'd make

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er bu'st a trace *a-tryin'*—jist
Fer old-acquaintance-sake!—
But work like that wuz lots more fun,
He said, than when he played!
Ho! the old Snow-Man
That Noey Bixler made!

He started with a big snow-ball,
And rolled it all around;
And as he rolled, more snow 'ud stick
And pull up off the ground.—
He rolled and rolled all round the yard—
'Cause we could see the *track*,
All wher' the snow come off, you know,
And left it wet and black.
He got the Snow-Man's *legs-part* rolled—
In front the kitchen-door,—
And then he hat to turn in then
And roll and roll some more!—
He rolled the yard all round ag'in,
And round the house, at that—
Clean round the house and back to wher'
The blame legs-half wuz at!
He said he missed his dinner, too—
Jist clean fergot and stayed
There workin'. Oh! the old Snow-Man
That Noey Bixler made!

And Noey said he hat to *hump*
To git the *top-half* on
The *legs-half*!—When he *did*, he said,
His wind wuz purt' nigh gone.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

He said, i jucks! he jist drapped down
There on the old porch-floor
And panted like a dog!—And then
He up! and rolled some more!—
The *last* batch—that wuz fer his head,—
And—time he'd got it right
And clumb and fixed it on, he said—
He hat to quit fer night!—
And *then*, he said, he'd kep' right on
Ef they'd be'n any *moon*
To work by! So he crawled in bed—
And *could* 'a' slep' tel *noon*,
He wuz so plum wore out! he said,—
But it wuz washin'-day,
And hat to cut a cord o' wood
'Fore he could git away!

But, last, he got to work ag'in,—
With spade, and gouge, and hoe,
And trowel, too—(All tools 'ud do
What *Noey* said, you know!)
He cut his eyebrows out like cliffs—
And his cheek-bones and chin
Stuck *furder* out—and his old *nose*
Stuck out as fur-ag'in!
He made his eyes o' walnuts,
And his whiskers out o' this-
Here buggy-cushion stuffin'—*moss*,
The teacher says it is.
And then he made a' old wood'-gun,
Set keerless-like, you know,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Acrost one shoulder—kind o' like
Big Foot, er Adam Poe—
Er, mayby, Simon Girty,
The dinged old Renegade!
Wooh! the old Snow-Man
That Noey Bixler made!

And there he stood, all fierce and grim,
A stern, heroic form:
What was the winter blast to him,
And what the driving storm?—
What wonder that the children pressed
Their faces at the pane
And scratched away the frost, in pride
To look on him again?
What wonder that, with yearning bold,
Their all of love and care
Went warmest through the keenest cold
To that Snow-Man out there!

But the old Snow-Man—
What a dubious delight
He grew at last when Spring came on
And days waxed warm and bright.—
Alone he stood—all kith and kin
Of snow and ice were gone;—
Alone, with constant tear-drops in
His eyes and glittering on
His thin, pathetic beard of black—
Grief in a hopeless cause!—
Hope—hope is for the man that *dies*—
What for the man that *thaws*!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

O Hero of a hero's make!—
Let *marble* melt and fade,
But never *you*—you old Snow-Man
That Noey Bixler made!

MISCELLANY

257 *The Ginoine Ar-tickle*

TALKIN' o' poetry—There're few men yit
'At's got the stuff b'iled down so's it'll pour
Out sorghum-like, and keeps a year and more
Jes' sweeter ever' time you tackle it!
W'y, all the jinglin' truck 'at hes been writ
Fer twenty year and better is so pore
You cain't find no sap in it any more
'N you'd find juice in puff-balls!—*And I'd quit!*
What people wants is facts, I apperhend;
And naked Natur is the thing to give
Your writin' bottom, eh? And I contend
'At honest work is allus bound to live.
Now them's my views; 'cause you kin recommend
Sich poetry as that from end to end.

258 *Lines to An Onsettled Young Man*

"O, WHAT is Life at last," says you,
" 'At woman folks and man folks too,
Cain't, oncomplainin', worry through?

"An' what is Love, 'at no one yit
'At's monkeyed with it kin forgit,
Er gits fat on remember'n' hit?

THE HOOSIER BOOK

"An' what is Death?"—W'y, looky hyur—
Ef Life an' Love don't suit you, sir,
Hit's jes' the thing yer lookin' fer!

259 *What Smith Knew About Farming*

THERE wasn't two purtier farms in the state
Than the couple of which I'm about to relate;—
Jinin' each other—belongin' to Brown,
And jest at the edge of a flourishin' town.
Brown was a man, as I understand,
That allus had handled a good 'eal o' land,
And was sharp as a tack in drivin' a trade—
For that's the way most of his money was made.
And all the grounds and the orchards about
His two pet farms was all tricked out
With poppies and posies
And sweet-smellin' rosies;
And hundreds o' kinds
Of all sorts o' vines,
To tickle the most horticultural minds;
And little dwarf trees not as thick as your wrist
With ripe apples on 'em as big as your fist:
And peaches,—Siberian crabs and pears,
And quinces—Well! *any* fruit *any* tree bears;
And the purtiest stream—jest a-swimmin' with fish,
And—*jest a'most everything heart could wish!*
The purtiest orch'rds—I wish you could see
How purty they was, fer I know it 'ud be

THE HOOSIER BOOK

A regular treat!—but I'll go ahead with
My story! A man by the name o' Smith—
(A bad name to rhyme,
But I reckon that I'm
Not goin' back on a Smith! nary time!)
'At hadn't a soul of kin nor kith,
And more money than he knowed what to do with,—
So he comes a-ridin' along one day,
And *he* says to Brown, in his offhand way—
Who was trainin' some newfangled vines round a bay-
Winder—"Howdy-do—look-a-here—say:
What'll you take fer this property here?—
I'm talkin' o' leavin' the city this year,
And I want to be
Where the air is free,
And I'll *buy* this place, if it ain't too dear!"—
Well—they grumbled and jawed aroun'—
"I don't like to part with the place," says Brown;
"Well," says Smith, a-jerkin' his head,
"That house yonder—bricks painted red—
Jest like this'n—a *puttier view*—
Who is it owns *it*?" "That's mine too,"
Says Brown, as he winked at a hole in his shoe,
"But I'll tell you right here jest what I *kin* do:—
If you'll pay the figgers I'll sell *it* to you."
Smith went over and looked at the place—
Badgered with Brown, and argied the case—
Thought that Brown's figgers was rather too tall,
But, findin' that Brown wasn't goin' to fall,
In final agreed,
So they drewed up the deed
Fer the farm and the fixtures—the live stock an' all.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And so Smith moved from the city as soon
As he possibly could—But “the man in the moon”
Knowned more’n Smith o’ farmin’ pursuits,
And jest to convince you, and have no disputes,
How little he knowed,
I’ll tell you his “mode,”
As he called it, o’ raisin’ “the best that growed,”
In the way o’ potatoes—
Cucumbers—tomatoes,
And squashes as lengthy as young alligators.
’Twas allus a curious thing to me
How big a fool a feller kin be
When he gits on a farm after leavin’ a town!—
Expectin’ to raise himself up to renown,
And reap fer himself agricultural fame,
By growin’ of squashes—*without any shame*—
As useless and long as a technical name.
To make the soil pure,
And certainly sure,
He plastered the ground with patent manure.
He had cultivators, and double-hoss plows,
And patent machines fer milkin’ his cows;
And patent hay-forks—patent measures and weights,
And new patent back-action hinges fer gates,
And barn locks and latches, and such little dribs,
And patents to keep the rats out o’ the cribs—
Reapers and mowers,
And patent grain sowers;
And drillers
And tillers
And cucumber hillers,

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And harriers;—and had patent rollers and scrapers,
And took about ten agricultural papers.
So you can imagine how matters turned out:
But *Brown* didn't have not a shadder o' doubt
That Smith didn't know what he was about
When he said that "the *old* way to farm was played out."
But Smith worked ahead,
And when any one said
That the *old* way o' workin' was better instead
O' his "modern idees," he allus turned red,
And wanted to know
What made people so
Infernally anxious to hear theirselves crow?
And guessed that he'd manage to hoe his own row.
Brown he come onc't and leant over the fence,
And told Smith that he couldn't see any sense
In goin' to such a tremendous expense
Fer the sake o' such no-account expeeriments:—
"That'll never make corn!
As shore's you're born
It'll come out the leetlest end of the horn!"
Says Brown, as he pulled off a big roastin'-ear
From a stalk of his own
That had tribble outgrown
Smith's poor yaller shoots, and says he, "Looky here!
This corn was raised in the old-fashioned way,
And I rather imagine that *this* corn'll pay
Expenses fer *raisin'* it!—What do you say?"
Brown got him then to look over his crop.—
His luck that season had been tip-top!
And you may surmise
Smith opened his eyes

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And let out a look o' the wildest surprise
When Brown showed him punkins as big as the lies
He was stuffin' him with—about offers he's had
Fer his farm: "I don't want to sell very bad,"
He says, but says he,
"Mr. Smith, you kin see
Fer yourself how matters is standin' with me,
I understand farmin' and I'd better stay,
You know, on my farm;—I'm a-makin' it pay—
I oughtn't to grumble!—I reckon I'll clear
Away over four thousand dollars this year."
And that was the reason, he made it appear,
Why he didn't care about sellin' his farm,
And hinted at his havin' done himself harm
In sellin' the other, and wanted to know
If Smith wouldn't sell back ag'in to him.—So
Smith took the bait, and says he, "Mr. Brown,
I wouldn't *sell* out, but we might swap aroun'—
How'll you trade your place fer mine?"
(Purty sharp way o' comin' the shine
Over Smith! Wasn't it?) Well, sir, this Brown
Played out his hand and brought Smithy down—
Traded with him an', workin' it cute,
Raked in two thousand dollars to boot
As slick as a whistle, an' that wasn't all,—
He managed to trade back ag'in the next fall,—
And the next—and the next—as long as Smith stayed
He reaped with his harvests an annual trade.—
Why, I reckon that Brown must 'a' easily made—
On an *average*—nearly two thousand a year—
Together he made over seven thousand—clear.—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Till Mr. Smith found he was losin' his health
In as big a proportion, almost, as his wealth;
So at last he concluded to move back to town,
And sold back his farm to this same Mr. Brown
At very low figgers, by gittin' it down.
Further'n this I have nothin' to say
Than merely advisin' the Smiths fer to stay
In their grocery stores in flourishin' towns
And leave agriculture alone—and the Browns.

260 *Two Sonnets to the June-Bug*

I

YOU make me jes' a little nervouser
Than any dog-gone bug I ever see!
And you know night's the time to pester me—
When any tetch at all 'll rub the fur
Of all my patience back'ards! You're the myrrh
And ruburb of my life! A bumblebee
Cain't hold a candle to you; and a he
Bald hornet, with a laminated spur
In his hip-pocket, daresent even cheep
When you're around! And, dern ye! you have
made
Me lose whole ricks and stacks and piles of sleep,—
And many of a livelong night I've laid
And never shut an eye, hearin' you keep
Up that eternal buzzin' serenade!

And I've got up and lit the lamp, and clum
 On cheers and trunks and wash-stands and bureaus,
 And all such dangerous articles as those,
 And biffed at you with brooms, and never come
 In two feet of you,—maybe skeered you some,—
 But what does that amount to when it throws
 A feller out o' balance, and his nose
 Gits barked ag'inst the mantel, while you hum
 Fer joy around the room, and churn your head
 Ag'inst the ceilin', and draw back and butt
 The plasterin' loose, and drop—behind the bed,
 Where never human-bein' ever putt
 Harm's hand on you, er ever truthful said
 He'd choke yer dern infernal wizen shut!

261

My First Womern

I BURIED my first womern
 In the spring; and in the fall
 I was married to my second,
 And hain't settled yit at all!—
 Fer I'm allus thinkin'—thinkin'
 Of the first one's peaceful ways,
 A-bilin' soap and singin'
 Of the Lord's amazin' grace.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And I'm thinkin' of her, constant,

Dyin' carpet chain and stuff,

And a-makin' up rag carpets,

When the *floor* was good enough!

And I mind her he'p a-feedin',

And I riccollect her now

A-drappin' corn, and keepin'

Clos't behind me and the plow!

And I'm allus thinkin' of her

Reddin' up around the house;

Er cookin' fer the farm-hands;

Er a-drivin' up the cows.—

And there she lays out yonder

By the lower medder fence,

Where the cows was barely grazin',

And they're usin' ever sence.

And when I look acrost there—

Say it's when the clover's ripe,

And I'm settin', in the evenin',

On the porch here, with my pipe,

And the *other'n* hollers "Henry!"—

W'y they ain't no sadder thing

Than to think of my first womern

And her funeral last spring

Was a year ago—

262 *Our Old Friend Neverfail*

O IT'S good to ketch a relative 'at's richer and don't run
 When you holler out to hold up, and 'll joke and have
 his fun;
 It's good to hear a man called bad and then find out he's
 not,
 Er strike some chap they call lukewarm 'at's really red-hot;
 It's good to know the Devil's painted jes' a leetle black,
 And it's good to have most anybody pat you on the back;—
 But jes' the best thing in the world's our old friend
 Neverfail,
 When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog wags his
 tail!

I like to strike the man I owe the same time I can pay,
 And take back things I've borried, and su'prise folks that-
 away;
 I like to find out that the man I voted fer last fall,
 That didn't git elected, was a scoundrel after all;
 I like the man that likes the pore and he'ps 'em when he
 can;
 I like to meet a ragged tramp 'at's still a gentleman;
 But most I like—with you, my boy—our old friend Never-
 fail,
 When he wags yer hand as honest as an old dog wags his
 tail!

THE HOOSIER BOOK

263 To—"The J. W. R. Literary Club"

WELL, it's enough to turn his head to have a feller's
name

Swiped with a *Literary Club*!—But *you're* the ones to
blame!—

I call the World to witness that I never *agged* ye to it
By ever writin' *Classic-like*—*because I couldn't* do it.
I never run to "Hellicon," ner writ about "Per-nas-sus,"
Ner never tried to rack er ride around on old "P-gassus"!
When "Tuneful Nines" has cross'd my lines, the ink 'ud
blot and blur it,

And pen 'ud jest putt back fer home, and take the short-
way fer it!

And so, as I'm a-sayin',—when you name your LITERARY
In honor o' this name o' mine, it's railly nessessary—
Whilse I'm *a-thankin'* you and all—to *warn* you, ef you
do it,

I'll haf to jine the thing myse'f 'fore I can live up to it!

264

Old Indiany

FRAGMENT

INTENDED FOR A DINNER OF THE INDIANA SOCIETY
OF CHICAGO

OLD Indiany, 'course we know
Is first, and best, and *most*, also,
Of *all* the States' whole forty-four:—
She's first in ever'thing, that's shore!—

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And *best* in ever'way as yet
Made known to man; and you kin bet
She's *most*, because she won't confess
She ever was, or will be, *less*!
And yet, fer all her proud array
Of sons, how many gits away!—
No doubt about her bein' *great*
But, fellers, she's a leaky State!
And them that boasts the most about
Her, them's the ones that's dribbled out.
Law! jes' to think of all you boys
'Way over here in Illinoise
A-celebratin', like ye air,
Old Indiany, 'way back there
In the dark ages, so to speak,
A-prayin' for ye once a week
And wonderin' what's a-keepin' you
From comin', like you ort to do.
You're all a-lookin' well, and like
You wasn't "sidin' up the pike,"
As the tramp-shoemaker said
When "he sacked the boss and shed
The blame town, to hunt fer one
Where they didn't work fer fun!"
Lookin' *extry* well, I'd say,
Your old home so fur away.—
Maybe, though, like the old jour.,
Fun ain't all yer workin' fer.
So you've found a job that *pays*.
Better than in them old days
You was on *The Weekly Press*,
Heppin' run things, more er less;

THE HOOSIER BOOK

Er a-learnin' telegraph-
Operatin', with a half-
Notion of the tinner's trade,
Er the dusty man's that laid
Out designs on marble and
Hacked out little lambs by hand,
And chewed fine-cut as he wrought,
"Shapin' from his bitter thought"
Some squshed mutterings to say,—
"Yes, hard work, and porer pay!"
Er you'd kind o' thought the far-
Gazin' cuss that owned a car
And took pictures in it, had
Jes' the snap you wanted—bad!
And you even wondered why
He kep' foolin' with his sky-
Light the same on shiny days
As when rainin'. ('T leaked always.)
Wondered what strange things was hid
In there when he shet the door
And smelt like a burnt drug store
Next some orchard-trees, i swan!
With whole roasted apples on!
That's why Ade is, here of late,
Buyin' in the dear old State,—
So's to cut it up in plots
Of both town and country lots.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

265

Abe Martin

ABE MARTIN!—dad-burn his old picture!
P'tends he's a Brown County fixture—
A kind of a comical mixture

Of hoss-sense and no sense at all!
His mouth, like his pipe, 's allus goin',
And his thoughts, like his whiskers, is flowin',
And what he don't know ain't wuth knowin'—
From Genesis clean to baseball!

The artist, Kin Hubbard, 's so keerless
He draws Abe most eyeless and earless,
But he's never yet pictured him cheerless

Er with fun 'at he tries to conceal,—
Whuther on to the fence er clean over
A-rootin' up ragweed er clover,
Skeered stiff at some "Rambler" er "Rover"
Er newfangled automobile!

It's a purty steep climate old Brown's in;
And the rains there his ducks nearly drowns in
The old man hisse'f wades his rounds in
As ca'm and serene, mighty nigh,
As the old handsaw-hawg, er the mottled
Milch cow, er the old rooster wattled
Like the mumps had him 'most so well throttled
That it was a pleasure to die.

THE HOOSIER BOOK

But best of 'em all's the fool-breaks 'at.
Abe don't see at all, and yit makes 'at.
Both me and you lays back and shakes at
His comic, miraculous cracks:
Which makes him—clean back of the power
Of genius itse'f in its flower—
This Notable Man of the Hour,
Abe Martin, The Joker on Facts,

266 *My Conscience*

SOMETIMES my Conscience says, says he,
“Don't you know me?”
And I, says I, skeered through and through,
“Of course I do.
You air a nice chap ever' way,
I'm here to say!
You make me cry—you make me pray,
And all them good things thataway—
That is, at *night*. Where do you stay
Durin' the day?”

And then my Conscience says, one't more,
“You know me—shore?”
“Oh, yes,” says I, a-trimblin' faint,
“You're jes' a saint!
Your ways is all so holy-right,
I love you better ever' night
You come around,—tel plum daylight,
When you air out o' sight!”

THE HOOSIER BOOK

And then my Conscience sort o' grits
His teeth, and spits
On ~~his~~ two hands and grabs, of course,
Some old remorse,
And beats me with the big butt-end
O' *that* thing—tel my closest friend
'Ud hardly know me. "Now," says he,
"Be keerful as you'd orto be
And *allus* think o' me!"

267

"A Happy Dream"

WRITTEN JUNE 26, 1916

AS fair as summer just begun,
Come Cornelia Allison
With a lovely poem made for me
Lovely as a poem can be.
"O how wondrous!" I exclaim.
"Poem in theme and poem in name!"
What a triumph you have won,
O Cornelia Allison!

INDEXES

INDEX OF TITLES
INDEX OF FIRST LINES

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INDEX OF TITLES

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INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|------------------------------------------|--------|
| ABE MARTIN | 265 |
| ABSENCE OF LITTLE WESLEY, THE | 197 |
| ALMOST BEYOND ENDURANCE | 162 |
| ARMAZINDY | 131 |
| AS MY UNCLE UST TO SAY | 117 |
| AT AUNTY'S HOUSE | 103 |
| AT "THE LITERARY" | 198 |
| BACK FROM TOWN | 217 |
| BEAR FAMILY, A | 242 |
| BEAR STORY, THE | 255 |
| BEE-BAG, THE | 213 |
| BILLY AND HIS DRUM | 231 |
| BILLY GOODIN' | 99 |
| BILLY MILLER'S CIRCUS SHOW | 167 |
| "BLUE-MONDAY" AT THE SHOE SHOP | 189 |
| BOY LIVES ON OUR FARM, THE | 107 |
| BOYS' CANDIDATE, THE | 89 |
| BOY'S MOTHER, A | 105 |
| BOYS OF THE OLD GLEE CLUB, THE | 248 |
| BUB SAYS | 192 |
| BUD'S FAIRY TALE | 254 |
| BUMBLEBEE, THE | 90 |
| BY ANY OTHER NAME | 123 |
| CANARY AT THE FARM, A | 43 |
| CASSANDER | 154 |
| CHILD-WORLD, THE | 251 |
| CHRISTMAS AFTERTHOUGHT | 75 |
| CHRISTMAS MEMORY, A | 235 |
| CLIMATIC SORCERY | 239 |
| CLOVER, THE | 2 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|------------------------------------------------|--------|
| "COMPANY MANNERS" | 247 |
| "COON-DOG WESS" | 18 |
| CUORED O' SKEERIN' | 219 |
| DAWN, NOON AND DEWFALL | 116 |
| DECORATION DAY ON THE PLACE | 31 |
| DEFECTIVE SANTA CLAUS, A | 249 |
| DOC SIFERS | 67 |
| DOODLE-BUGS'S CHARM, THE | 211 |
| DOS'T O' BLUES, A | 33 |
| DOWN AROUND THE RIVER | 57 |
| DOWN ON WRIGGLE CRICK | 54 |
| DOWN TO THE CAPITAL | 199 |
| DREAM-MARCH | 222 |
| DUBIOUS "OLD KRISS," A | 240 |
| ELMER BROWN | 223 |
| ERASMUS WILSON | 15 |
| EXTREMES | 226 |
| EZRA HOUSE | 24 |
| FALL-CRICK VIEW OF THE EARTHQUAKE, A | 172 |
| FARMER WHIPPLE—BACHELOR | 115 |
| FEEL IN THE CHRIS'MAS-AIR, A | 153 |
| FESSLER'S BEES | 205 |
| FEW OF THE BIRD-FAMILY, A | 142 |
| FIRE AT NIGHT | 171 |
| FIRST BLUEBIRD, THE | 28 |
| FISHING PARTY, THE | 106 |
| FOLKS AT LONESOMEVILLE | 140 |
| FOOL-YOUNGENS | 230 |
| FULL HARVEST, A | 118 |
| FUNNIEST THING IN THE WORLD, THE | 82 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|----------------------------------------------|---------|
| GINOINE AR-TICKLE, THE | 257 |
| GOIN' TO THE FAIR | 204 |
| GOLDIE GOODWIN | 187 |
| GOOD-BY ER HOWDY-DO | 168 |
| GOOD, OLD-FASHIONED PEOPLE, THE | 234 |
| GRAMPA'S CHOICE | 181 |
| GRANDFATHER SQUEERS | 85 |
| GRANNY | 47 |
| GRIGGSBY'S STATION | 40 |
| GUINEY-PIGS | 83 |
| GUSTATORY ACHIEVEMENT, A | 245 |
| HAPPY DREAM, A | 267 |
| HAPPY LITTLE CRIPPLE, THE | 74 |
| HER POET-BROTHER | 177 |
| HIRED MAN'S DOG-STORY, THE | 176 |
| HIRED MAN'S FAITH IN CHILDREN, THE | 159 |
| HIS MOTHER'S WAY | 112 |
| HIS PA'S ROMANCE | 161 |
| HOME AGAIN | 220 |
| "HOME AG'IN" | 151 |
| HOME-FOLKS | 144 |
| HOME-MADE FAIRY TALE, A | 38 |
| HOODOO, THE | 124 |
| HOOSIER CALENDAR, A | 175 |
| HOOSIER SPRING-POETRY | 191 |
| HOSS, THE | 22 |
| "HOW DID YOU REST, LAST NIGHT?" | 134 |
| HOW IT HAPPENED | 5 |
| HOW JOHN QUIT THE FARM | 111 |
| HYMB OF FAITH, A | 8 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|---------------------------------------|--------|
| I' GOT TO FACE MOTHER TO-DAY | 178 |
| IDIOT, AN | 158 |
| IMPETUOUS RESOLVE, AN | 97 |
| IMPROMPTU FAIRY-TALE, AN | 221 |
| IN FERVENT PRAISE OF PICNICS | 238 |
| IN THE NIGHT | 76 |
| INTELLECTUAL LIMITATIONS | 227 |
| IRY AND BILLY AND JO | 121 |
| IT'S GOT TO BE | 190 |
| JACK THE GIANT KILLER | 114 |
| JAP MILLER | 113 |
| JAYBIRD, THE | 241 |
| JIM | 51 |
| JOHN ALDEN AND PERCILLY | 128 |
| JOLLY MILLER, THE | 102 |
| JONEY | 46 |
| KINGRY'S MILL | 45 |
| KNEE-DEEP IN JUNE | 41 |
| LAND OF THUS-AND-SO, THE | 84 |
| "LAST CHRISTMAS WAS A YEAR AGO" | 203 |
| LIKE HIS MOTHER USED TO MAKE | 49 |
| LINES TO AN UNSETTLED YOUNG MAN | 258 |
| LINES TO PERFESSER JOHN CLARK RIDPATH | 36 |
| LISPER, THE | 163 |
| LITTLE COUSIN JASPER | 212 |
| LITTLE DICK AND THE CLOCK | 229 |
| LITTLE-GIRL-TWO-LITTLE-GIRLS | 244 |
| LITTLE JOHNTS'S CHRIS'MUS | 88 |
| LITTLE LAME BOY'S VIEWS, A | 179 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|---------------------------------------------|--------|
| LITTLE MANDY'S CHRISTMAS-TREE | 86 |
| LITTLE MOCK-MAN, THE | 148 |
| LITTLE ORPHANT ANNIE | 56 |
| LITTLE TINY KICKSHAW, THE | 60 |
| LITTLE TOWN O' TAILHOLT, THE | 55 |
| 'LIZABUTH-ANN ON BAKIN'-DAY | 184 |
| LIZ-TOWN HUMORIST, A | 44 |
| MAN BY THE NAME OF BOLUS, A | 218 |
| MAN IN THE MOON, THE | 98 |
| MARTHY ELLEN | 63 |
| MAX AND JIM | 81 |
| MAYMIE'S STORY OF RED RIDING-HOOD | 253 |
| ME AND MARY | 170 |
| MISTER HOP-TOAD | 145 |
| 'MONGST THE HILLS O' SOMERSET | 214 |
| MORTUL PRAYER, A | 27 |
| "MOTHER" | 185 |
| MULBERRY TREE, THE | 12 |
| MUSKINGUM VALLEY, THE | 133 |
| MY CONSCIENCE | 266 |
| MY DANCIN'-DAYS IS OVER | 150 |
| MY FIDDLE | 14 |
| MY FIRST WOMERN | 261 |
| MY HENRY | 136 |
| MY PHILOSOFY | 1 |
| MY RUTHERS | 16 |
| "MYLO JONES'S WIFE" | 20 |
| NAME US NO NAMES NO MORE | 194 |
| NAUGHTY CLAUDE | 95 |
| NEVER TALK BACK | 169 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| NEW YEAR'S TIME-AT WILLARDS'S, A | 52 |
| NOBLE OLD ELM, THE | 232 |
| NOTHIN' TO SAY | 196 |
| | |
| OLD BAND, THE | 202 |
| "OLD BOB WHITE" | 236 |
| OLD-FASHIONED ROSES | 39 |
| OLD GRANNY DUSK | 166 |
| OLD HAYMOW, THE | 82 |
| OLD HOME BY THE MILL, THE | 71 |
| OLD HOME-FOLKS, THE | 252 |
| OLD INDIANY | 264 |
| OLD JOHN CLEVENGER ON BUCKEYES | 21 |
| OLD JOHN HENRY | 215 |
| OLD MAN AND JIM, THE | 260 |
| OLD MAN WHISKERY-WHEE-KUM-WHEEZE | 243 |
| OLD MAN'S MEMORY, AN | 35 |
| OLD MAN'S NURSERY RHYME | 80 |
| OLD OCTOBER | 50 |
| OLD PLAYED-OUT SONG, A | 17 |
| OLD SWIMMIN'-HOLE, THE | 4 |
| OLD TRAMP, THE | 93 |
| OLD WINTERS ON THE FARM | 126 |
| ON ANY ORDINARY MAN IN A HIGH STATE OF LAUGHTURE AND DELIGHT | 29 |
| ON THE BANKS O' DEER CRICK | 110 |
| ON THE DEATH OF LITTLE MAHALA ASHCRAFT | 11 |
| OUR BETSY | 164 |
| OUR HIRED GIRL | 109 |
| OUR OLD FRIEND NEVERFAIL | 262 |
| OUR QUEER OLD WORLD | 155 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|---------------------------------------------------------|--------|
| PAP'S OLD SAYIN' | 34 |
| PARENT REPRIMANDED, A | 246 |
| PENALTY OF GENIUS, THE | 233 |
| PEN-PICTUR' OF A CERT'IN FRIVVOLUS OLD MAN, A | 25 |
| PERVERSITY | 193 |
| PET COON, THE | 94 |
| POEMS HERE AT HOME, THE | 195 |
| "PREACHER'S BOY, THE" | 96 |
| PRIOR TO MISS BELLE'S APPEARANCE | 100 |
| PROSPECTIVE GLIMPSE, A | 92 |
| RABBIT | 180 |
| RAGGEDY MAN, THE | 104 |
| RAGGEDY MAN ON CHILDREN, THE | 183 |
| RAMBO-TREE, THE | 225 |
| REGARDIN' TERRY-HUT | 53 |
| RHYMES OF IRONQUILL, THE | 156 |
| RIGHT HERE AT HOME | 119 |
| "RINGWORM FRANK" | 138 |
| RIVALS; OR THE SHOWMAN'S RUSE, THE | 130 |
| ROMANCIN' | 58 |
| ROSSVILLE LECTUR' COURSE, THE | 32 |
| RUBÁIYÁT OF DOC SIFERS | 250 |
| RUNAWAY BOY, THE | 108 |
| SCHOOLBOY'S FAVORITE, THE | 147 |
| SCOTTY | 216 |
| SESSION WITH UNCLE SIDNEY, A | 237 |
| SHE "DISPLAINS" IT | 101 |
| SISTER JONES'S CONFESSION | 120 |
| SMITTEN PURIST, THE | 157 |
| SOME CHRISTMAS YOUNGSTERS | 174 |
| SOME SCATTERING REMARKS OF BUB'S | 129 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|-----------------------------------------------|--------|
| SOMEF'N COMMON-LIKE | 59 |
| SPIRITS AT HOME | 173 |
| SPOILED CHILD, THE | 210 |
| SQUIRE HAWKINS'S STORY | 208 |
| SQUIRT-GUN UNCLE MAKED ME, THE | 78 |
| STEPMOTHER, THE | 61 |
| SUMMER'S DAY, A | 7 |
| SUMMER-TIME AND WINTER-TIME | 149 |
| SYMPTOMS | 188 |
| TALE OF THE AIRLY DAYS, A | 19 |
| THAT-AIR YOUNG-UN | 79 |
| THEM FLOWERS | 122 |
| "THEM OLD CHEERY WORDS" | 160 |
| THINKIN' BACK | 182 |
| THIS MAN JONES | 65 |
| THOMAS THE PRETENDER | 228 |
| THOUGHTS FER THE DISCOURAGED FARMER | 6 |
| THOUGHTS ON A PORE JOKE | 26 |
| THOUGHTS ON THE LATE WAR | 201 |
| THREE JOLLY HUNTERS, THE | 141 |
| TO MY OLD FRIEND, WILLIAM LEACHMAN | 13 |
| TO—"THE J. W. R. LITERARY CLUB" | 263 |
| TO "UNCLE REMUS" | 152 |
| TOM JOHNSON'S QUIT | 70 |
| TOWN AND COUNTRY | 30 |
| TOY-BALLOON, THE | 165 |
| TOY PENNY-DOG, THE | 143 |
| "TRADIN' JOE" | 206 |
| TRAIN-MISSER, THE | 48 |
| TREE-TOAD, THE | 3 |
| TRULY MARVELOUS, THE | 209 |

INDEX OF TITLES

| | NUMBER |
|-------------------------------------------------|--------|
| TWINS, THE | 127 |
| TWO SONNETS TO THE JUNE-BUG | 260 |
| UNCLE MART'S POEM | 256 |
| UNCLE SIDNEY | 72 |
| UNCLE SIDNEY'S LOGIC | 146 |
| UNCLE WILLIAM'S PICTURE | 207 |
| UP AND DOWN OLD BRANDYWINE | 135 |
| US FARMERS IN THE COUNTRY | 37 |
| WAITIN' FER THE CAT TO DIE | 73 |
| WANT TO BE WHUR MOTHER IS | 62 |
| WAY IT WUZ, THE | 69 |
| WET-WEATHER TALK | 23 |
| WHAT CHRIS'MAS FETCHED THE WIGGINSES | 125 |
| WHAT LITTLE SAUL GOT, CHRISTMAS | 186 |
| WHAT SMITH KNEW ABOUT FARMING | 259 |
| WHATEVER THE WEATHER MAY BE | 68 |
| WHEN LIDE MARRIED HIM | 137 |
| WHEN OUR BABY DIED | 77 |
| WHEN THE FROST IS ON THE PUNKIN | 10 |
| WHEN THE GREEN GITS BACK IN THE TREES | 66 |
| WHEN THE HEARSE COMES BACK | 42 |
| WHEN THE WORLD BU'STS THROUGH | 91 |
| WHEN WE FIRST PLAYED "SHOW" | 224 |
| WHO SANTY CLAUS WUZ | 64 |
| WORTERMELON TIME | 9 |
| WRITIN' BACK TO THE HOME-FOLKS | 132 |
| YOUTHFUL PATRIOT, THE | 139 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

Lines thus designated * are not the first lines of individual poems but of parts of longer poems

| | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| A Child-World, yet a wondrous world no less | 505 |
| A little boy once played so loud | 431 |
| A man by the name of Bokus—(all 'at we'll ever know | 420 |
| A' old Tramp slep' in our stable wunst | 170 |
| A passel o' boys last night | 135 |
| A thing 'at's 'bout as tryin' as a healthy man kin meet | 81 |
| Abe Martin!—dad-burn his old picture | 570 |
| After a thoughtful, almost painful pause | 144 |
| All 'at I ever want to be | 298 |
| All my feelin's in the Spring | 320 |
| Allus when our Pa he's away | 470 |
| Armazindy;—fambily name | 241 |
| As fair as summer just begun | 572 |
| As it's give' me to perceive | 59 |
| At Billy Miller's Circus-Show | 317 |
| Awf'lest boy in this-here town | 427 |
| *Babe she's so always | 326 |
| Bleak January! Cold as fate | 328 |
| Bud, come here to your uncle a spell | 73 |
| "Cassander! O Cassander!"—her mother's voice seems cle'r | 285 |
| 'Cause Herbert Graham's a' only child | 409 |
| Childern—take 'em as they run | 345 |
| Come listen, good people, while a story I do tell . . . | 51 |
| "Coon-dog Wess"—he allus went | 34 |
| Dawn, noon and dewfall! Bluebird and robin | 211 |
| Dogs, I contend, is jes' about | 332 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Elsie Mingus <i>lisps</i> , she does | 311 |
| Fer any boy 'at's little as me | 270 |
| Fer forty year and better you have been a friend to me | 22 |
| Fire! Fire! Ring and ring | 321 |
| First and best of earthly joys | 343 |
| First she come to our house | 119 |
| First the teacher called the roll | 219 |
| Folks has be'n to town, and Sahry | 83 |
| Folks in town, I reckon, thinks | 365 |
| Folks up here at Rossville got up a Lectur' Course . . | 63 |
| Giants is the biggest mens they air | 409 |
| Granny's come to our house | 91 |
| Guess 'at Billy hain't got back | 238 |
| Guiney-pigs is awful cute | 153 |
| Had a harelip—Joney had | 89 |
| "Had, too!" | 181 |
| He was jes' a plain, ever'-day, all-round kind of jour. | 97 |
| He's jes' a great, big, awk'ard, hulkin' | 258 |
| Ho! it's come, kids, come | 436 |
| Ho! the old Snow-Man | 552 |
| Home-folks!—Well, that-air name to me | 266 |
| "How did you rest, last night?" | 253 |
| "How would Willie like to go | 154 |
| Howdy, Mister Hop-Toad! Glad to see you out . . | 267 |
| I ain't a-goin' to cry no more, no more | 310 |
| I ain't, ner don't p'tend to be | 1 |
| I believe <i>all</i> childern's good | 294 |
| I' be'n a-kindo' " <i>musin'</i> ," as the feller says, and I'm | 115 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| I' be'n down to the Capital at Washington, D. C. | 368 |
| I buried my first womern | 564 |
| I got no patience with blues at all | 65 |
| I got to face Mother to-day, fer a fact | 339 |
| I got to <i>thinkin'</i> of her—both her parunts dead and gone | 7 |
| I hain't no hand at tellin' tales | 398 |
| I have jest about decided | 232 |
| I kin hump my back and take the rain | 322 |
| I like fun—and I like jokes | 57 |
| I rickollect the little tad, back, years and years ago | 172 |
| I s'pose it takes a feller 'at's be'n | 342 |
| I tell you what I'd ruther do | 30 |
| I thought the deacon liked me, yit | 215 |
| "I was born in Indiany," says a stranger, lank and slim | 94 |
| I was for Union—you, ag'in' it | 374 |
| If you don't know Doc Sifers I'll jes' argy, here and now | 481 |
| • I'm a-feelin' ruther sad | 276 |
| I'm bin a-visitun 'bout a week | 423 |
| I'm gittin' old—I know | 346 |
| I'm not a-workin' now | 351 |
| I'm one o' these cur'ous kind o' chaps | 392 |
| I'm on'y thist a' idiot | 293 |
| I'm thist a little cripple boy, an' never goin' to grow | 141 |
| I'm twins, I guess, 'cause my Ma say | 457 |
| In spring, when the green gits back in the trees | 127 |
| In the golden noon-shine | 273 |
| In the jolly winters | 150 |
| Iry an' Billy an' Jo | 216 |
| It hain't no use to grumble and complane | 49 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| It was a Jolly Miller lived on the River Dee . . . | 182 |
| It's a mystery to see me—a man o' fifty-four . . . | 206 |
| It's a purty hard world you find, my child . . . | 288 |
| It's lonesome—sorto' lonesome,—it's a <i>Sund'y-day</i> , to me | 61 |
| It's mighty good to git back to the old town, shore . . | 375 |
| It's the curiousest thing in creation | 32 |
| I've allus held—till jest of late | 289 |
| I've be'n thinkin' back, of late | 343 |
| I've thought a power on men and things | 212 |
| Janey Pettibone's the best | 169 |
| Jap Miller down at Martinsville's the blamedest feller yit | 203 |
| Jes' a little bit o' feller—I remember still | 123 |
| Jest Frank Reed's his <i>real</i> name—though | 261 |
| Jest rain and snow! and rain again | 59 |
| Las' July—and, I presume | 133 |
| Las' time 'at Uncle Sidney come | 167 |
| * <i>Last</i> Chris'mus, little Benny | 325 |
| Last Christmas was a year ago | 377 |
| Last Thanksgivin'-dinner we | 458 |
| Lawzy! don't I rickollect | 139 |
| 'Lish, you rickollect that-air | 422 |
| Little Cousin Jasper, he | 411 |
| "Little Haly! Little Haly!" cheeps the robin in the tree | 19 |
| Little Mandy and her Ma | 160 |
| Little Orphant Annie's come to our house to stay . . | 111 |
| 'Ll where in the world my eyes has bin | 93 |
| Look so neat an' sweet in all yer frills an' fancy pleatin' | 178 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Ma put my Penny-Dog | 265 |
| Max an' Jim | 152 |
| Me an' Bert an' Minnie-Belle | 435 |
| 'Mongst the Hills o' Somerset | 414 |
| Most ontimely old man yit | 54 |
| Mostly, folks is law-abidin' | 107 |
| My dear old friends—It jes' beats all | 250 |
| My fiddle?—Well, I kindo' keep her handy, don't you know | 25 |
| "My grandfather Squeers," said The Raggedy Man | 156 |
| My mother, she's so good to me | 188 |
| My old Uncle Sidney, he says it's a sign | 350 |
| "Mylo Jones's wife" was all | 40 |
| Never talk back! sich things is repperhensible | 319 |
| Nobody on the old farm here but Mother, me and John | 196 |
| Noey Bixler ketched him, an' fetched him in to me | 171 |
| Noon-time and June-time, down around the river | 114 |
| Nothin' to say, my daughter! Nothin' at all to say | 362 |
| Now, Tudens, you sit on this knee—and 'scuse | 443 |
| O Big Old Tree so tall an' fine | 437 |
| *O here's a little rhyme for the Spring- or Summer- time | 448 |
| O it's good to ketch a relative 'at's richer and don't run | 566 |
| O, it's many's the scenes which is dear to my mind | 29 |
| O The Raggedy Man! He works fer Pa | 185 |
| O there were three jolly hunters | 263 |
| O, Thou that doth all things devise | 12 |
| O what did the little boy do | 262 |
| "O, what is Life at last," says you | 557 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|
| Of all the doctors I could cite you to in this-'ere town | 128 |
| Oh, if we had a rich boss | 352 |
| Oh! tell me a tale of the airy days | 39 |
| Oh! the old swimmin'-hole! whare the crick so still and deep | 5 |
| Oh! Thou that veileth from all eyes | 57 |
| Oh! what ef little childerns all | 338 |
| Old Bob White's a funny bird | 442 |
| Old friends allus is the best | 418 |
| Old Granny Dusk, when the sun goes down | 316 |
| Old Indiany, 'course we know | 567 |
| Old John Clevenger lets on | 42 |
| Old John's jes' made o' the commonest stuff | 416 |
| Old man never had much to say | 371 |
| Old Man Whiskery-Whee-Kum-Wheeze | 456 |
| Old October's purt' nigh gone | 95 |
| Old wortermelon time is a-comin' round again | 14 |
| On old Brandywine—about | 86 |
| On 'Scurion-days—an' Shows—an' Fairs | 340 |
| On the banks o' Deer Crick! There's the place fer me | 195 |
| One time, when we'z at Aunt's house | 183 |
| One's the pictur' of his Pa | 233 |
| Our hired girl, she's 'Lizabuth Ann | 192 |
| Our Hired Girl, when it's bakin'-day | 345 |
| Owned a pair o' skates onc't.—Traded | 220 |
| Pa he bringed me here to stay | 440 |
| Pa wunst he scold' an' says to me | 269 |
| Pap had one old-fashioned sayin' | 66 |
| Pap he allus ust to say | 294 |
| Pap's got his pattent-right, and rich as all creation | 75 |
| Parunts don't git toys an' things | 327 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| Parunts knows lots more than us | 432 |
| Picnics is fun 'at's purty hard to beat | 449 |
| Pore-folks lives at Lonsomeville | 262 |
| 'Ras Wilson, I respect you, 'cause | 27 |
| Right here at home, boys, in old Hoosierdom | 214 |
| Said The Raggedy Man, on a hot afternoon | 175 |
| Say good-by er howdy-do | 318 |
| Scotty's dead.—Of course he is | 417 |
| "'Scur'ous-like," said the tree-toad | 4 |
| Seems like a feller'd ort 'o jes' to-day | 213 |
| Sence I tuk holt o' Gibbsses' Churn | 105 |
| Sence little Wesley went, the place seems all so strange and still | 363 |
| Settin' round the stove, last night | 84 |
| Sing, oh, rarest of roundelays | 359 |
| Some peoples thinks they ain't no Fairies <i>now</i> | 539 |
| Some sings of the lilly, and daisy, and rose | 3 |
| Somep'n 'at's common-like, and good | 118 |
| Sometimes I think 'at Parunts does | 458 |
| Sometimes my Conscience says, says he | 571 |
| Sometimes, when I bin bad | 139 |
| Such was the Child-World of the long-ago | 510 |
| Take a feller 'at's sick and laid up on the shelf | 218 |
| "Talkin' 'bout yer bees," says Ike | 384 |
| Talkin' o' poetry—There're few men yit | 557 |
| Tell you a story—an' it's a fac' | 204 |
| Tell you what I like the best | 77 |
| That-air young-un ust to set | 147 |
| The Boy lives on our Farm, he's not | 190 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| The delights of our childhood is soon passed away . . . | 68 |
| The funniest thing in the world, I know . . . | 163 |
| The hoss he is a splendud beast . . . | 46 |
| The Jaybird he's my favorite . . . | 453 |
| The Little Mock-man on the Stairs . . . | 272 |
| The little tiny kickshaw that Mither sent tae me . . . | 118 |
| The moon in the sky is a custard pie . . . | 357 |
| The Muskingum Valley—How longin' the gaze . . . | 252 |
| The Old Bob-white, and Chipbird . . . | 264 |
| The Old Haymow's the place to play . . . | 152 |
| The Poems here at Home!—Who'll write 'em down . . . | 361 |
| The summer winds is sniffin' round the bloomin' locus' trees . . . | 8 |
| The Summer's put the idy in . . . | 10 |
| There was Father, and Mother, and Emmy, and Jane . . . | 323 |
| There wasn't two purtier farms in the state . . . | 558 |
| There's old man Willards; an' his wife . . . | 99 |
| They ain't no style about 'em . . . | 74 |
| They wuz a Big Day wunst in town . . . | 314 |
| They's a kind o' feel in the air, to me . . . | 283 |
| They's a prejudice allus 'twixt country and town . . . | 60 |
| They's nothin' in the name to strike . . . | 121 |
| This is "The Old Home by the Mill"—fer we still call it so . . . | 137 |
| This man Jones was what you'd call . . . | 124 |
| Thweet Poethy! let me <i>lithp</i> forthwith . . . | 292 |
| Tommy's alluz playin' jokes . . . | 432 |
| Temps 'ud allus haf to say . . . | 202 |
| *Uncle he learns us to rhyme an' write . . . | 448 |
| *Uncle he says 'at 'way down in the sea . . . | 447 |
| Uncle Sidney, when he was here . . . | 146 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| *Uncle Sidney's vurry proud | 448 |
| Uncle William, last July | 396 |
| Up and down old Brandywine | 254 |
| *Us childern's all so lonesome | 312 |
| Us farmers in the country, as the seasons go and come | 71 |
| Us-folks is purty pore—but Ma | 450 |
| Us parents mostly thinks our own's | 349 |
| "Want to be whur mother is! Want to be whur mother is!" | 120 |
| Wasn't it a funny dream!—perfectly bewild'rin' | 425 |
| Wasn't it a good time | 428 |
| We got it up a-purpose, jes' fer little Johnts, you know | 163 |
| We got up a Christmas-doin's | 234 |
| We love your dear old face and voice | 283 |
| Well, it's enough to turn his head to have a feller's name | 267 |
| What is it in old fiddle-chunes 'at makes me ketch my breath | 274 |
| What makes you come <i>here</i> fer, Mister | 179 |
| "Whatever the weather may be," says he | 131 |
| When Autumn shakes the rambo-tree | 430 |
| When Bess gave her dollies a Tea, said she | 459 |
| When Dicky was sick | 433 |
| When ever'thing's a-goin' like she's got-a-goin' now | 356 |
| When frost's all on our winder, an' the snows | 450 |
| When I was ist a Brownie—a weenty-teenty Brownie | 413 |
| "When it's <i>got</i> to be,"—like I always say | 354 |
| When it's night, and no light, too | 144 |
| When Lide married <i>him</i> —w'y, she had to jes' dee-fy | 259 |
| When Little Claude was naughty wunst | 172 |

INDEX OF FIRST LINES

| | PAGE |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------|
| When Little Dickie Swope's a man | 175 |
| When little 'Pollus Morton he's | 438 |
| When Me an' my Ma an' Pa went to the Fair . . . | 383 |
| When our baby died | 145 |
| When the frost is on the punkin' and the fodder's in the shock | 17 |
| When Uncle Sidney he comes here | 410 |
| When we hear Uncle Sidney tell | 439 |
| Where's a boy a-goin' | 168 |
| Winter-time, er Summer-time | 221 |
| Wunst I sassed my Pa, an' he | 191 |
| Wunst I tooked our pepper-box lid | 237 |
| Wunst upon a time wunst | 424 |
| Wunst, 'way West in Illinoise | 453 |
| Wunst we went a-fishin'—Me | 189 |
| W'y, one time wuz a little-weenty dirl | 534 |
| W'y, wunst they wuz a Little Boy went out . . . | 547 |
| You better not fool with a Bumblebee | 167 |
| You-folks rickollect, I know | 460 |
| You have more'n likely noticed | 358 |
| You kin boast about yer cities, and their stiddy growth and size | 110 |
| You make me jes' a little nervouser | 563 |
| Your neighbors in the country, whare you come from, hain't fergot | 69 |

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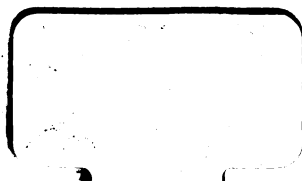
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